

Nixon Tells How He Stands

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Up to Critics

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., July 17—President Nixon, in an interview with one of his supporters, portrays himself as able to persevere in office despite the pressures of the impeachment scandal because of his own inner strength, his sense of innocence and his belief in the importance of his role in achieving world peace. The interview with Rabbi Baruch M. Korff, published in Rabbi Korff's book, "The Personal Nixon: Staying on the Summit," provides an unusual self-assessment of a public figure who has closely guarded his personal privacy throughout his career.

Released to the press yesterday, the interview offers the first personal view of the impeachment proceedings by Mr. Nixon in some months. The President has not had a news conference since March 6 and has let his lawyer, James D. St. Clair, make all the White House statements on impeachment.

In the interview, Rabbi Korff, who is chairman of the National Citizens Committee for Fairness to the Presidency, asked Mr. Nixon how he could "stand up" under the "vilification and attacks" since the Watergate scandal broke.

In a long answer, Mr. Nixon said that part of his ability to stand up to the great pressures of the last year and a half had been inherited from his "strong mother, strong father, both of whom worked hard and were, incidentally, deeply religious."

Family Support Cited

Also important, he said, was the strong support of his wife, his daughters and his two sons-in-law, "all of whom stand like a rock against attacks when they are made."

The President said he had been helped by a good White House staff, adding that he needed "strong men" such as Gen. Alexander M. Haigh Jr., the White House chief of staff.

"But in more personal terms," Mr. Nixon said, "it gets down to what the Quakers call peace at the center. And any peace at the center means that whatever the storms are that may be roaring up or down that the individual must have and retain that peace within him, and that will see him through all the adversity."

In addition to the inner peace stemming from his Quaker mother, Mr. Nixon told Rabbi Korff, he has also been conditioned by past crises. It is, he said, "enormously important for any individual who knows he must go through some pretty tough times," to have "been through the battle." "Throughout my life I have not had it easy. I worked hard

as a boy. I worked my way through school," Mr. Nixon said.

Because he has usually been the "center of controversy" and stood up for "unpopular positions," Mr. Nixon said he had always been a target of attacks. But over the years, he said, he has been able to develop an "immunity" to those attacks. "I did not mean 'a thin skin.'" That phrase connotes insensitivity, he said. He suggested that because he had "peace at the center" he was not an insensitive man.

But the fact that he had gone through defeat, in races for the Presidency and the Governorship of California, and had fought for unpopular causes such as "peace with honor" in Vietnam has enabled him to build up this immunity to attacks, Mr. Nixon asserted.

However, the President indicated to Rabbi Korff that he had been "hurt" by attacks against his family and his friends. He did not mention what attacks he had in mind.

The President said that in the face of all the storms he had weathered in political life he had developed something like "fatalism."

"But it isn't exactly that," he said, "because one must make his own fate. He must not simply toss on the sea and not attempt to swim to land. There is a way to go to land."

"The most important fact," Mr. Nixon continued, "is that the individual must know inside, deep inside, that he is right. He must believe that if, for example, these charges and the Watergate and the cover-up, etc, were true, nobody would have to ask me to resign."

"I wouldn't serve for one minute if they were true. But I know they are not true and, therefore, I will stay here and do the job that I was elected to do as well as I can, and trust to the American constitutional process to make the final verdict."

Throughout his assessment, Mr. Nixon displayed a preoccupation with the news media and his conviction that much of the press was his enemy.

Speaking of the White House press corps, for example, Mr. Nixon said that he knew that "my policies are generally disapproved of, and there are some, putting it in the vernacular, who hate my guts with a passion."

The President expressed the belief that history would judge him and his Administration not on the basis of the Watergate scandal, but on his accomplishments, particularly in foreign policy.