

Excerpts From Interview With Nixon by

Special to The New York Times

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., July 17—Following are additional excerpts from an interview with President Nixon in the White House last May 13 by Rabbi Baruch M. Korff, president of the National Committee for Fairness to the Presidency. The interview is part of a book by Rabbi Korff, "The Personal Nixon: Staying on the Summit," copyright 1974.

RABBI KORFF: A friend of yours, a Mr. [Ralph] de Toledand, who has known you, he said for 25 years, says he has never once heard the President make a racial slur. I know, Mr. President, from my brief association—and I researched my soul—that there is not an ounce of prejudice in you. But I, nevertheless, would like very much to have your comments on this.

MR. NIXON: Well, as far as the charges that were made, they have perhaps even by this time been totally denied by Mr. [J. Fred] Buzhardt yesterday and Leonard Garment today, but be that as it may, the critical point is what the attitude of whoever is President is toward all races and all religions. Now, I would say in terms of anti-Semitism, first you have to be judged by your actions. There has been no stronger supporter of Israel than myself. Mrs. Meir will tell you that, without the airlift and without the alert, Israel would probably not have survived.

Q. And even then, you stood alone.

A. I overruled a lot of people within the Administration. Now, the other point is, of course, this: That if there was any attitude which would suggest anti-Semitism, why would I have appointed Walter Annenberg Ambassador to London.

Let me tell you, many of the so-called Eastern elite objected to his appointment. They didn't say it was because he was Jewish, but deep down that was the reason some of them objected. I can assure you, too, that the appointment of Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State was strongly [opposed] despite his brilliance and in this instance, many thought because of the delicate negotiations that had to take place in the Mideast and the fact that we depended some on the Arab countries for our oil.

But to be quite truthful, we must recognize that in every country, including America, there is an anti-strain. Some people are anti-Semitic, some people are anti-Catholic, some people are anti-black, some people are maybe anti-Italian or Polish, or what have you, but as far as I am concerned, when we look at this Administration, the Secretary of State, the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, the chairman of Fed-

eral Reserve Board, the Ambassador, the highest ambassadorial post in terms of distinction that can be granted, all are held by men of the Jewish faith.

So ask them. The point is the actions give lie to the fabricated words.

Assessment of Watergate

Q. Can you tell us how you think historians 50 years from now will assess to Watergate, how will they assess that in relation to other events and the achievements of your years as President?

A. Well, I can first indicate a hope and perhaps my prediction will be, shall we say, the result of a hope. As I read history, what really matters as far as leaders are concerned is what they did on those great issues that affect the great masses of the people for good or for bad.

I do not mean to say that political abuses should be overlooked, whether conducted by our side or conducted by the other side.

I never went to a meeting without having not only a demonstration, but in many instances violence. I don't blame Senator McGovern for it, because just in the case of Watergate, sometimes overzealous people do things they shouldn't do, and some of the people who supported him acted violently, in many instances as we know.

As people look back to the year of the 70's, Watergate will be written about as being something very difficult to understand, particularly coming in the campaign of an individual who is supposed to be a political pro, which I am. But as often said, I was so busy in the year '72, and this is not said in justification, it is only said by way of truth—I was so busy with my overriding concern to get the war brought to an end, to do the right things on the domestic side, that had to be done, that I frankly didn't pay any attention to the campaign.

In years past, I have been criticized because I always ran my own campaigns, and sometimes I lost, perhaps because I didn't have anybody else running it for me adequately. In 1972, I don't mean to throw off on those who ran the campaign. They meant well, but I can assure you that had I been spending the time on the day to day operations of this campaign and getting the reports, that I always insisted on in my previous campaigns, Watergate would never have happened.

John Mitchell put it pretty well. They asked him, "Did you tell the President?" He said, "No." They said, "Why not?" He said, "Well, because I thought he would blow his stack." Well, he was right, I would have. Now how will historians 50 years from now looking back on the United States of America and its role in the last third

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Head of Panel on Fairness to Presidency



United Press International

RELAXING: President Nixon guiding a golf cart at the Camp Pendleton, Calif., golf course yesterday. His daughter, Tricia, sits next to him, and following them in another cart is son-in-law, Edward F. Cox.

of the century, how are they going to assess Watergate? The point is, how did Watergate affect the election of '72 and the answer is, Watergate affected the election in 1972 only reducing the margin that we won by.

Because it was a negative issue for us. Nothing was obtained there as we know. No information. It was not only wrong, but the wrong was compounded by its being totally senseless and stupid.

Effect on Those Involved

Q. Throughout the transcripts, Mr. President, there is a repeatedly stated concern on your part for the impact of Watergate on the lives of both those young men not involved and those caught up in this affair. Do you think an injustice has been done? Has there been a wholesale smear of the President's men in the Watergate affair?

A. Well, I would have to say that with the number of committees, with some of the activity, not of Mr. Jaworski, whom I respect very much, but some of the activities of some of his eager-beaver staffers, that there has been an abusive process.

If these activities, the kind of tactics that have been used, the harassment of secretaries and stenographers and people who can't afford a lawyer, and so forth, hours and hours of drilling and questioning and threatening and all the rest, if these tactics had been used in the day of Joe McCarthy, he would have been ridden out of town on a rail.

I believe that when it's all sorted out in the end, it will be found that there has been harassment on a massive

basis of innocent people, that many without guilt have had their reputations badly damaged, and I fear, too, that it will be found that many who have been charged with guilt have been charged on flimsy indictments, as was indicated in the Mitchell-Stans trial.

Motivation of Critics

Q. Sir, do you believe that the motivation of those who seek your impeachment is ideological or political or personal malice? How much of it do you believe is genuine concern over the wrongdoing that took place in Watergate and how much is ideological?

A. It depends on the group. I would say that generally speaking, as far as the people in the media are concerned, it is an ideological thing. As I said, if I were a liberal, Watergate would be a blip.

As far as those in Congress are concerned, there are mixed emotions. Some are partisan, although many Democrats support me very strongly, and some Republicans, I think, are concerned about the outcome of their own elections this November and feel that if the President were to resign that their chances would be better, and that I understand. And so, in the Congress you have some of it that is partisan, although not as much as you would think.

I think when a Congressman and Senator gets right down to the tough call, he is going to think a long time before he wants to impeach a President, unless he finds wrongdoing, which justifies impeachment. It is interesting to note that the analyses that has been made of these tran-

scripts which were very difficult for me to put out.

But now the great majority of those who analyze them say they don't find an impeachable offense, but they don't like their tone. Well I can say that if they were to tape the conversations of Presidents that I have known, they wouldn't like their tone either.

I mean, there has to be at times very pragmatic talk in this office, and I would say also that on that score, I don't have any apologies with regard to having tried to give, say, Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Ehrlichman, the benefit of the doubt during a terribly difficult two-week period from the 15th of April to the 30th of April when they left.

After all, they had served well, they protested their innocence, they still do and I felt that I had to, as my conversations with Mr. Petersen and all the questions I asked him demonstrated, I felt that I had to be reasonably sure. If there was guilt, out they would go, but I had to be reasonably sure that there was enough evidence that their usefulness would be destroyed and that they would have to fight from the outside, and that, of course, was the decision. And it was like asking me to cut off one arm and then another to have these two men leave. And it was a terribly difficult experience, and I would have to plead.

Q. Compassion? A. Well, I would defend with compassion, but I would have to plead to those who charged that I did not act as swiftly as I should, I would have to say, yes I will admit in that respect that maybe I should have acted more swiftly, but

if one of them had been in this spot getting one story from one person, and another story from another person, not knowing where the truth was, and we don't even know what the truth is today, then I wonder how they would have acted.

I believe that under our system it is terribly important that we not overlook, above everything else, the right of an individual to be considered innocent until proven guilty, but beyond that, when he is under attack, not to run away from him right away. That is the political thing to do.

But to stand by him, unless he either is guilty or admits it, or unless he becomes, because of the charges, in some cases—and that was the case with Bob Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, because they both still protest their innocence and I trust will be found innocent along with the others—unless their usefulness is impaired.

But I guess compassion in a President is not considered to be a virtue anymore, particularly when it does involve men who were close to him in developing policies that were basically conservative policies.

Criterion for Judgment

Q. Mr. President, what would be the criterion which you believe that Congress should use to judge you in the impeachment vote if it ever gets to Congress? Our feeling is that the House Judiciary, many of them—you may not agree with this—are so indebted to the arch deacon of impeachment, Mr. Meany, due to his lavish support of them, but my feeling and the feeling of others is

that it will be drawn almost on partisan lines.

A. Well, of course, it would be presumptuous for me to indicate what the Judiciary Committee will do. I have read reports in the press to the effect that it is probably likely that the Judiciary Committee would refer the issue to the House.

And then when the issues come to the House, the members of the House have to bite the bullet. They cannot pass the buck. The idea that a member of the House will say, "Well, I can't judge this, let's send it over to the Senate," that is not our system.

Each member of the House is going to have to study the evidence, search his conscience, and vote what he believes is right, and I think that is what he will do, and that is all I would ask.

Now, what criteria will he use? Well, a member of the House cannot, and I am sure would not use the criterion first of the popularity of the President. We would have impeached over half of our Presidents in their second terms if that were a criterion.

The second point is that I don't believe that the members of the House, when they really think about it, will impeach simply because of their concern about the effect on their party, so to speak. I noticed recently that some of my good party members took umbrage at a statement that I made that it was not the party that mattered, it was the country that mattered.

Well, now, I am a party man. I am one of the few party men that has campaigned all over the country in good years and bad years, for weak candidates and strong candidates. I was one of the few who campaigned the country for Senator Goldwater in '64 and in '58, when there were no Cabinet officers except one, I was the only one out campaigning for our Republicans.

In 1954, it was the same story. In 1966 I was practically alone because most of these fellows were considered to be losers, but I never considered it that way. But, nevertheless, that should demonstrate my party credentials.

I am very much concerned about what happens to the party. I want the members of my party where they are good candidates, to win in November. But however, if there are good Democrats, and I know many good Democrats, I will be for them.

Effect on Presidency

Q. Regardless of party? A. The country must always come before party and at the present time, a resignation or impeachment of the President of the United States would, in my view, have devastating consequences in terms of our foreign policy, would jeopardize the best hope we have to build a structure of peace in the

world, the best hope we have had in this century or perhaps in two centuries, and also, would have a very detrimental effect on our political system for years to come due to the fact that it would weaken the Presidency.

It would mean that every President in the future, as he sits in this office, would be afraid to make unpopular decisions, and most of the great decisions that have been made in our history have been unpopular, and have been made by strong men.

The moment that a President is looking over his shoulder down to Capitol Hill before he makes a decision, he then will be a weak President and he will always come down on the side of what appears to be the popular move rather than being a strong President coming down on the side of what is right for this country.

For that reason, among others, I must fight the impeachment, and I must, of course, as everybody knows, refuse to resign. While it would be comfortable to sit on the sands of San Clemente and have all of this behind me, I owe an obligation to continue the work that I have begun in the field of foreign affairs and in the movement toward a peaceful world.

And second, on the domestic front, to continue to work for those basic philosophical principles of returning government to the people rather than having it centered here in Washington. And third, and this is probably the major concern that I have in this whole impeachment-resignation talk, and why the decision has to be one to fight it through to the finish and fight it through to win, and that is that if I do not fight, if I were to run away or walk off the job, and if I do not fight the impeachment as it comes before the House in some form or other, I would leave to my successor, be he Democrat or Republican, not just the next one, but for all time to come, a precedent of a man mortally weakened from this process of destroying a President who was not guilty of a high crime or misdemeanor. If that were to succeed, this office will never then have the strong President that is needed.

And so, you ask what is the test that a man in the Congress should apply? In this case, you go to the Constitution. The Constitution is very clear. It is treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors, and I have every confidence that these hearings, as long and as difficult and tortuous and misinterpreted as they will be, in the end, will demonstrate clearly that the present occupant of this office is not guilty of any of those crimes.