

# A City Full of Questions

But Capital Has No Firm Answers  
On Why the President Doesn't Resign

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 7—Whatever can the man be thinking of? Why does he insist on prolonging the agony? What does he want to do, hang on until Christmas?

The Federal city was full of questions like that today, because almost no one—  
**News Analysis** from President Nixon's few remaining defenders

to his swelling throng of critics—seemed able to explain his refusal, so far, to resign.

Mr. Nixon was under the most excruciating kind of pressure to step down, from party leaders across the nation, from almost all the Republicans in Congress and even from key members of his own staff. He was isolated, repudiated, overtaken by events. It seemed to everyone in Washington that this was Richard M. Nixon's last crisis.

Surely he sensed, after the House Judiciary Committee voted impeachment, that his prospects were grim. Surely he knew that he was understating the case on Monday when he said new evidence "may further damage my case." Surely he knew by yesterday that he had little or no chance of acquittal in a senate trial.

## Calls Him 'Quite Aware'

"Oh, he knows, all right," one old friend said today. "He's quite aware that he will probably be convicted."

Yet the President, by the accounts of those who attended a Cabinet meeting yesterday and a Republican Congressional leadership meeting today, is in a "serene" and "amiable" mood, and apparently reluctant to surrender.

Various "official" explanations are offered by the men around the President, if they are promised anonymity: Mr. Nixon considers resignation a disservice to the Presidency, because it would establish a dangerous precedent; he wants to see the constitutional process through, to make the historical record; he hopes that something will come up, perhaps at the trial, that will enable him to survive.

But none of these explanations seems to suffice, given the personal and national torment that a Senate trial would certainly generate.

Nor are the arguments of the cynics persuasive — arguments that Mr. Nixon is trying to strike a deal to avoid criminal prosecution after leaving office, that he hopes over a period of months to "manufacture" new evidence that would somehow negate the present record.

## In His Character

The real explanation for the President's behavior, it can be argued, lies deeply within his own character.

Mr. Nixon adires strong men, men who triumph over adversity, men who suffer for what they believe in. He has often compared himself with Wilson and Lincoln, other Presidents who endured ordeals.

In the introduction to his book "Six Crises," the Presi-

dent says that a man looking back on life must ask himself: "Did he risk all when the stakes were such that he might win all or lose all? Did he affirmatively seek the opportunities to use his talents to the utmost in causes that went far beyond personal and family considerations?"

Strong men don't quit, Mr. Nixon believes, any more than strong nations do.

James David Barber suggests in his book, "The Presidential Character," published in 1972, that Mr. Nixon's fear of "humiliation" in defeat for the United States, as expressed in the fiery rhetoric of his speech announcing the invasion of Cambodia, was closely related to his vision of his own life.

"The loss of power to forces beyond his control would constitute a severe threat," Mr. Barber wrote, well before the Watergate burglary. "That would be a time to go down, if go down he must, in flames."

## Taught by Experience

The President's own experience has taught him that perseverance works, even when it seems unlikely to: He won his wife that way, kept his place on the 1952 Republican ticket that way, and ultimately won the Presidency that way in 1968.

Both Mr. Barber and Bruce Mazlish a psychohistorian at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who wrote "In Search of Nixon," believe that the President's doggedness and fear of failure are combined with an unflinching belief in the rectitude of all of his works. "Because he believes so well of himself," Mr. Mazlish has written, "denying himself even the possibility of angry or immoral acts, President Nixon is not being a hypocrite in his statements. He believes with total conviction in the role he is playing."

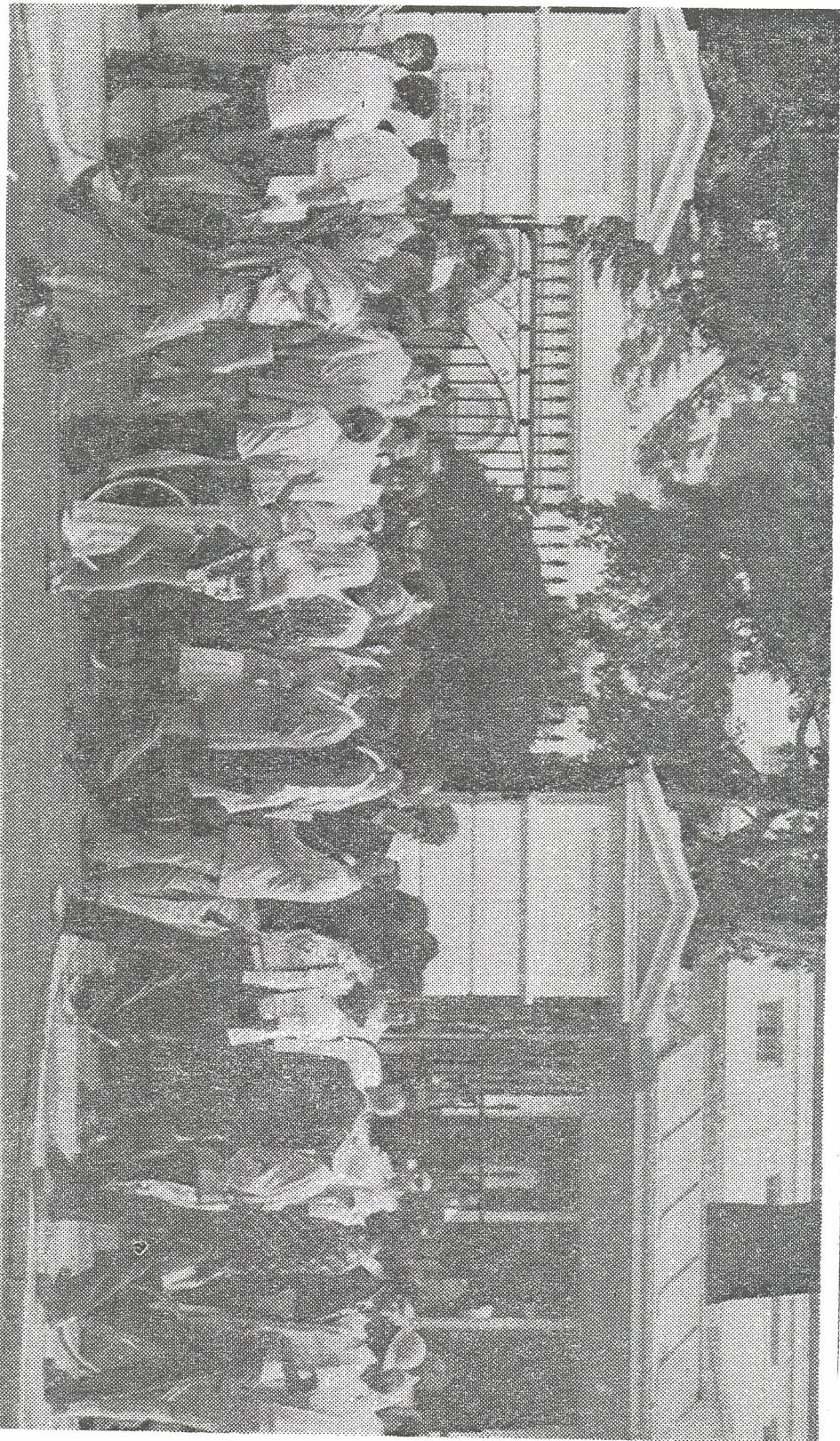
In that context, Mr. Mazlish said in an interview, the President might well conclude that hesigning would constitute an admission of guilt, whereas conviction would permit him to proclaim his innocence and argue, "even if only to himself, that his enemies ambushed him."

Something of the same view was expressed today by an associate who has seen Mr. Nixon recently. The associate described the President as thoroughly persuaded that he had committed no impeachable offense, that he was engaged in a struggle between light and darkness, and that he was perhaps fated to be a martyr for justice.

This combination of traits — belief in suffering for large goals, moral certainty in one's rectitude, conviction that one's adversaries are evil—may have led the President to react to the ultimate threat, loss of power, with a defiance of the inevitable.

He may yet change his mind; in fact, the guessing in Washington is that he will. The pressures will mount, and he may yield. But his evident reluctance to do so is a clear demonstration of the character of the man.

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United Press International  
Spectators gathering outside the gates to the White House yesterday as rumors and speculation about President Nixon continued

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