

Nixon Says U.S. Lacks Pride

New York

Former President Nixon says the United States is a "compromised country" that deeply needs to restore its pride in itself.

He adds that the nation is "so cynical, so disbelieving" it might take a war to "regain our sense of belief in our country . . ."

His remarks — his most extensive public statements since resigning last year during the Watergate scandal — were in a copyright interview in the December issue of the Ladies Home Journal that was conducted by author-businessman William M. Fine.

The article includes a text of Mr. Nixon's comments. There

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were no remarks about Watergate.

A spokesman for the magazine said Mr. Nixon was not paid for the interview, which was conducted in May.

Mr. Nixon's office then read it "and suggested a few changes. Some were made and some that had nothing to do with accuracy were not."

Mr. Nixon, interviewed in his home in San Clemente, said:

"We are so cynical, so disbelieving — it may take the shock of an invasion — in Korea or in Thailand. If American lives are threatened, we may regain our sense of belief in our country and our need for strength. We are a compromised country at the moment. The Communist countries don't need troops or military acts right now.

"They can just keep adding pressure points and take strategic advantage in the Far East and Middle East. Japan will be questioning its position regularly. We gave the Philippines their independence too soon, I fear."

He also said, "We have very little leadership in our country today. Can you name any strong religious leaders? . . . Anyhow, if the church and the media and business and educators all allow the undermining of our strength and values, we will keep drifting that way — and our allies in the Far East won't put any belief in our commitments. I worry most about Japan."

Asked what he would do to counter this trend, he said:

"That's a question I have puzzled over more than once. I think I would ask five or six of the best brains around me to go off on a retreat for several weeks and ponder some things — how we could make our people feel more pride, not be so concerned with Arab wealth.

"What's wrong with being the second wealthiest country for a while? We, as a country, have to provide strength and leadership."

"I'd work on a major television presentation to our people on the eve of our 200th birthday. Remind them that in 1776 we only had spiritual wealth, and look where it took us. We must rekindle that spiritual growth to knit our people together . . . I guess that's part of an answer. I'd have to give it a lot more thought to make better sense."

On himself, Mr. Nixon said: "Yes, I know all the things that were and still are being said about me. Do you think the mood of the people is changing?"

Mr. Nixon had begun the interview by asking Fine: "How is the world in general, and what do they think of me lately?"

Fine said he told Mr. Nixon that he had expected that "our only living ex-president, in spite of the past, would be afforded just

a little more grace to honor the office of the presidency, even if the man must remain unforgiven."

Mr. Nixon replied: "Well, it might come to that. As you can see, we are not in a lap of luxury here, but we get by." Standing up, Mr. Nixon added: "Never give up. Never give up. Remember that."

Fine said Mr. Nixon appeared to be healthy, and sat with his troublesome left leg propped up on a chair during most of the interview.

On his successor, President Ford, he said: "He's okay. Right now, he is too accessible. A congress or a parliament can paralyze leadership. You can't get caught up in absurdities."

Fine said he told Mr. Nixon that he believed Mr. Nixon was at least "half of Henry Kissinger." Mr. Nixon responded: "How many people do you think understand that? It's true of course."

Mr. Nixon also commented on:

The Media: "The media has abdicated its fact-gathering to nonbelieving young people, who seem to want to break down our values. I used to be able to make sense with the Paleys, the Sarnoffs and the Goldensons, and with that new fellow at CBS, even with the key commentators; but a lot of their research comes from a very cynical element."

The CIA probe: "They are going to be polarized for a while, I'm afraid. I can't see how they can be helpful to our security if stripped of the cloak of secrecy. Sometimes, overt acts by the CIA can save thousands of lives and ease pressure points in world diplomacy. Extreme measures can be necessary if one is to put down evil consequences. The probe will show we accomplished some courageous acts. It will also show we had nothing to do with Chile or Allende. That was the Chileans."

Associated Press

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