

# Nixon Gives His View of the Resignation

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WASHINGTON, March 4 — Richard M. Nixon resigned the Presidency lest a "weak" political base in Congress and a protracted impeachment trial by the Senate "deprive America of the leadership it needed," he has written in his first published explanation of his abdication in 1974.

In forewords to the two final volumes of public papers of his Presidency, from the years 1973 and 1974, just published by the National Archives, Mr. Nixon virtually disregard the allegation of criminal and constitutional wrongdoing on which the House of Representatives was preparing to impeach him when he resigned.

He wrote in the 1974 volume that his first Administration and his aborted second Administration made "real progress—sometimes low, but always sure—towards achieving" his proclaimed goals of world peace and "rebirth of responsive and responsible government at every level in this country."

His accounts of his tenure suggested, as did his recent journey to China, that after having retreated to his home in San Clemente, Calif., he had begun trying to rehabilitate the image that history will have of his years in the White House.

"All the events of this year were played against the ever-darkening background of Watergate," Mr. Nixon wrote of the months preceding his emotional departure from the White House on Aug. 9, 1974. He continued:

"Effective leadership is a prerequisite for a great people and a great nation, and by August it was clear that whatever its eventual outcome, a protracted trial of the President in the Senate would deprive America of the leadership it needed.

"It was also clear that my own political base in Congress had become too weak to accomplish the important things that needed to be done in America and in the world during the remaining two years of my Administration.

"Therefore, on Aug. 9, in the second year of my second term, I resigned as President of the United States."

The two volumes together contained many of the documents — from transcripts of Watergate tape recordings to a record of speeches and denials of wrongdoing—that led ultimately to the first resignation by an American President.

But beyond acknowledging, in the foreword to the 1973 volume, that some documents "reflect the mistakes and mis-

judgments of the way I dealt with Watergate," Mr. Nixon made no reference to the substance of the accumulated charges against him.

In one sentence, Mr. Nixon described the resignation of Spiro T. Agnew from the Vice Presidency without any allusion to the plea bargaining on charges of Federal income tax evasion that produced it.

"In October, Vice President Agnew resigned his office, and I appointed Congressman Gerald R. Ford of Michigan to succeed him," he wrote.

The bulk of the two forewords dealt with matters as far removed from his own downfall. In the 1973 volume, Mr. Nixon wrote of "great tides of opinion and emotion" that flowed that year, and went on to cite "sadness" at the death of former President Lyndon B. Johnson, "excitement" at the launching of the Skylab space station and "pride" at the patriotic gestures made by prisoners of war returning from Vietnam.

He summed up the 1974 record by saying "it covers eight months of a momentous and troubled year during which we were able to make some significant progress towards maintaining peace abroad and towards building a new peacetime prosperity at home."

\* From Nixon's televised announcement of his resignation:

".... Throughout the long and difficult period of Watergate, I have felt it was my duty to persevere, to make every possible effort to complete the term of office to which you elected me. In the past few days, however, it has become evident to me that I no longer have a strong enough political base in the Congress to justify continuing that effort. ...."

Text of statement, NYT 9 Aug 74; also  
Congressional Quarterly (Watergate), p. 758