

# An Advance Look Into Nixon's Memoirs

London

In his forthcoming memoirs, Richard Nixon maintains his innocence and contends that Watergate was merely a partisan scandal used by his enemies to bring him down, according to publishing sources in the United States and Europe who have read part of the manuscript.

He expresses regret that he did not question his aides more closely, because he knew very little about the Watergate break-in and subsequent events.

Admitting only an error of judgment, he denies personal responsibility, says that he may have

let the American people down, though he did not intend to do so, and concludes that Watergate caused him a great injustice.

The former President declares that he resigned only to prevent six months of national divisiveness that would have resulted from an impeachment trial.

These views emerge in a closely guarded account in which Mr. Nixon disputes former aides and friends, differs with previously published books and discloses his own reflections on events ranging from his controversial campaign

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for the House of Representatives in 1946 to his resignation in the face of impeachment proceedings in 1974.

Knowledgeable publishing sources in Europe and the United States, who have seen the 164 pages of completed manuscript dealing with Watergate and the last two weeks of the Nixon administration, say that the document also contains the following descriptions and views:

- When Mr. Nixon decided that he could no longer remain in the White House, he summoned Vice President Ford and told him to prepare himself for the presidency. In reply, Mr. Ford said he wanted to talk it over first with his wife, Betty. In the same conversation, Mr. Nixon pleaded with his successor to retain Henry Kissinger as secretary of state.

- After President Nixon's farewell to the nation on television, Kissinger walked back to the Oval Office with Mr. Nixon and told him that he had just delivered one of the greatest speeches in American political history and would be regarded as one of the great Presidents.

- Robert Woodward and Carl Bernstein, in their book "The Final Days," describe an emotional scene in which Mr. Nixon and Kissinger got down on their knees and prayed together, but Mr. Nixon writes that they stood and prayed.

- From the beginning, General Alexander Haig Jr., then the White House chief of staff and now commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, was certain that Mr. Nixon would have to resign. Ronald Ziegler, press secretary and later presidential assistant, opposed resignation.

In addition, the book is to discuss the Vietnam war and Mr. Nixon's two choices for vice president. The outline puts it succinctly: "The resignation of Vice President Agnew" and "the decision-making process behind the choice of Gerald Ford to be vice president in October, 1973."

The Vietnam war is to be covered in great detail, beginning with 1969 and the secret bombing of Cambodia during the first months of the Nixon administration, and ending in 1973 with secret discussions about the renewal of bombing and the impact of domestic considerations, including Watergate, on these matters.

Mr. Nixon will also trace the development of his "long and close relationship" with Asian and European heads of state, from his first visits as a congressman to his decisions as President. The outline stresses that it was Mr. Nixon, rather than Secretary of State Kissinger, who set the course of American policies abroad.

For example, Mr. Nixon will tell of a note of Kissinger within a week of his inauguration in January, 1969, in which he suggested an "opening of relations with the People's Republic of China."

Two supplements accompany the secret outline. One is a 14-page list of "foreign contacts," including scores of prime ministers, presidents, chancellors, kings, ambassadors, princes, generals, admirals, queens and other leaders around the world. The second supplement, six pages long, mentions every foreign journey made by Mr. Nixon as President.

Warner Books has invested heavily in the Nixon memoirs, but the details of the contract have never been disclosed. One of its clauses provides that the amount of money to be received by the former President cannot be made public.

William Sarnoff, the Warner chairman, says that all sorts of inaccurate figures have been published. He mentioned figures that range from half a million dollars to \$4 million. "The real figure may be somewhere in between," he says.

Other sources privy to the terms of the agreement contend that Mr. Nixon will receive \$2 million plus provable expenses of as much as \$300,000. Payments are stretched out over five years to reduce Mr. Nixon's income taxes. The contract calls for a down payment of \$350,000, another \$350,000 at the end of this year and periodic installments thereafter.

New York Times

The potential clients were not permitted to make notes on the contents of the Nixon documents and were asked to promise not to discuss them. Despite the stringent security measures, it is known that one copy of the secret outline got away.

The outline promises that Mr. Nixon will also discuss how he

learned of the Watergate break-in; why he had a tape-recording system installed in the White House and why he decided not to destroy damaging recordings after their existence was publicly disclosed; how he learned of an 18½-minute gap on one of the tapes; his assessments of H. R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman, Charles Colson and John Dean III, all White House aides; a \$100,000 contribution from Howard Hughes; and the pardon granted to Mr. Nixon by President Ford.