

The Last Step Up For Nixon: Surrender

By GAYLORD SHAW
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON—At midday Monday, surrounded by the sounds of miscalculation, President Nixon slowly climbed the steep steps of the Executive Office Building.

Often in the past he had bounded up the steps two at a time. But now he was burdened with perhaps the worst crisis of his presidency, and he was heading for his hideaway office to search for a solution.

From Pennsylvania Avenue, 50 yards across the lawn, the President could hear the blaring of automobile horns as motorists responded to a demonstrator's "Honk for Impeachment" sign.

It was a daunting reminder that his earlier decision to seek a compromise on the Watergate tapes — a decision he hoped would bring a national sigh of relief—had instead brought what an aide called "some kind of a nightmare . . . a fire storm."

"A miscalculation," his White House counsel now bluntly calls the decision to force

through a resolution of the month-long tapes dispute.

Twenty-four hours after his walk up the steps of the office building, Nixon reached another decision. He would capitulate and surrender the Watergate tapes and documents to a federal judge — an abrupt turn-about announced in court Tuesday afternoon.

From presidential aides and other official and unofficial sources, the events leading to Nixon's turnaround can be reconstructed. The sources indicated these were the major factors leading to the President's decision:

—A warning by leading Republicans in Congress that he faced a serious impeachment effort and that even some faithful Capitol Hill followers were reluctant to defend him vigorously so long as he refused to release the tapes.

—A recognition that the public outcry resulting from the firing Saturday night of special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox was much greater than had been expected, and that it was overshadowing his agreement to

allow limited access to the tapes.

—High level concern that the domestic turmoil was damaging efforts to negotiate an end to the Middle East war and was hurting the President's image as a world leader.

Nixon's decision to turn over the tapes for inspection by U. S. District Judge John J. Sirica was made at about noon on Tuesday and came as a stunning surprise to even some of his closest aides. "I was thunderstruck — I couldn't believe it," said one aide, who has in the past prided himself on an ability to read the presidential mind.

On Monday, Oct. 15, Nixon had decided he would attempt to resolve the tapes issue, which, according to Haig, "had progressively begun to polarize our body politic."

"Lines were clearly being drawn both within the Congress and . . . within the viewpoint of the American people themselves," Haig said.

So, as time began running out on Nixon

to file his notice of appeal to the Supreme Court, he came up with a compromise: He would personally prepare a summary of the nine tapes, have it verified by Sen. John C. Stennis, D-Miss., and turn it over to both Judge Sirica and the Senate Watergate committee.

According to presidential aides, it was clear by Thursday that Cox would not go along with the compromise, and Nixon decided Friday morning that "we would attempt to resolve this dreadfully controversial issue . . . with or without Professor Cox," Haig said.

Cox announced he would not accept the White House proposal. Cox was fired, Atty. Gen. Elliot L. Richardson resigned, and Deputy Atty. Gen. William D. Ruckelshaus was fired.

First reaction was quick. By the time Nixon awoke Sunday morning, his staff had

compiled a 26-page special report tracing reaction in Congress and in the media. The condemnations were harsh, the words of support few.

By Monday morning, Nixon had a 15-page report disclosing that many of the newspapers that had warmly supported his re-election were vigorously denouncing him editorially.

Some even called for his impeachment or resignation — sentiment expressed later Monday by the AFL-CIO convention in Miami Beach.

By noon on Monday, it was clear to those close to the President that, as Special Counsel Charles Alan Wright later said, "Clearly we did miscalculate Friday night."

Nixon spent Tuesday morning in his Office and reached his decision about noon. At 2 p.m., Wright stood before a crowded courtroom and startled the nation by announcing the tapes would be turned over to Judge Sirica.

Batt Commentary

King Richard's Way

Two weeks ago, Newsweek Washington correspondent Tommy DeFrank told the tenth annual Texas Junior College Press Conference here that something much bigger than Nixon's problems with the nation's obsession with Watergate would surface within the coming year.

DeFrank now says that "something" may happen as early as next week, due to Nixon blunders of the past week-end. It is because of these blunders that the man who sold the nation on the "Mandate of 1972" should resign his post as President.

A resignation by Nixon would be both time- and money-saving and would permit the American public to address itself to more pressing problems, such as a settlement to the Mid-East dilemma and solutions to our year-round energy crisis.

Nixon signalled the beginning of his own end as far as executive privilege is concerned by his capitulation to court and Senate Watergate committee demands for release of his controversial tapes related to "plumbers" activities.

The picture Nixon vividly painted of himself is one of a man acting out of sheer desperation, a person totally incapable of taking care of the nation's problems and unable to avoid the political pitfalls that have frequented the White House time and again.

Elliott Richardson, in exchange for Nixon's kiss of death, promptly stuck the situation in Nixon's ear with his Tuesday morning press conference, one that saw Richardson receive a minute and one-half standing ovation from about 500 of his judicial peers. Although he said he could understand Nixon's motives, he had to endorse the strategy used by his special prosecutor, Archibald Cox.

Nixon wrongly expected people like Richardson and Cox to simply roll over in their sleep or play blind justice to the shenanigans he was pulling. Among these stunts is the possible acceptance of a \$2 million political contribution from the Associated Milk Producers, Inc., for milk quotas imposed Dec. 31, 1970. A copy of a letter sent to Nixon from the group promising such has been obtained by the Associated Press.

Whereto from here? The most sensible thing for a man on a sinking ship to do would be to get off, but only after his second Vice Presidential pick, Gerald Ford, is approved for office. There is growing sentiment to do this and to expedite the matter as quickly as possible so Nixon can resign, thus allowing Ford to carry on the mandate of 1972.

King Richard knows his ruling era has ended. If he doesn't get out soon, more appropriate measures should justifiably be initiated to effect a hasty "good riddance" and bring back credibility to the whole of our national government.

Protect Yourself

A recent decision by A&M Press Superintendent Cameron Beckwith is stimulating increased interest toward a University-wide traffic objective: safety.

Beckwith, in what we believe to be an unprecedented action taken by a campus administrator, now has all of his employes arriving 15 minutes ahead of the regular 8 to 5 workday schedule, so unnecessarily adhered to by most TAMU administrators.

His personnel begin working 15 minutes earlier each day, leave for lunch 15 minutes earlier and finally, get off work 15 minutes earlier. Although the move was primarily intended to help get the Battalion out to readers earlier, it is serving to relieve traffic congestion in the Parking Lot 7 area and gets leaving workers out of the way before the large mass of University employes leave for lunch.

Other department heads should take the hint and work out a logical system for helping to relieve the go-home traffic problem on campus.

It's not a big issue, but one that could be quickly solved by letting roughly half the University staff work and leave 15 minutes earlier. Who knows, the life it saves could be your own.

The Battalion

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Listen Up—

Bike Registration Help 'Appreciated'

Editor:

I was stopped and given a ticket this Monday for riding my bike on the mall. I would like to be informed of the following:

1. If an announcement stating restrictions on bike-riding appeared, where was it?
2. My ticket reads "ride on

mall" as one of the violations. What exactly are the boundaries of "the mall?"

I was also in violation because I have not registered my bike yet. I realize this is my fault, but I think there should have been an announcement of a deadline for registering bikes. Since I try to

comply with all the rules the University sets down, I will pay this ticket and register my bicycle as soon as possible. However, if I am not informed of regulations, I cannot possibly obey them. Some help would be appreciated in this area.

Pam Haynes



Pictures appearing in the Battalion on Wednesday Sept. 12, a story ran in the Friday, Sept. 14 issue listing a schedule of registration dates by campus location. If you're not reading the Battalion, we suggest you start. If you had registered your bike, officials would have given you a pamphlet of currently enforced rules. Registration through Sept. 28, as the staff noted.—Ed.

Editor:

Something needs to be said about the conduct of some people during Midnight Tell Practice.

Because of the synthetic covering the field, fireworks are not allowed in Kyle Field. It seems someone always has shoot some fireworks during Midnight Tell Practice. This is the quickest way to one of the best traditions at A&M. Aggies don't need fireworks to show the twelfth is there. Next time, leave fireworks at home and just yell louder.

Buck Birdson '73

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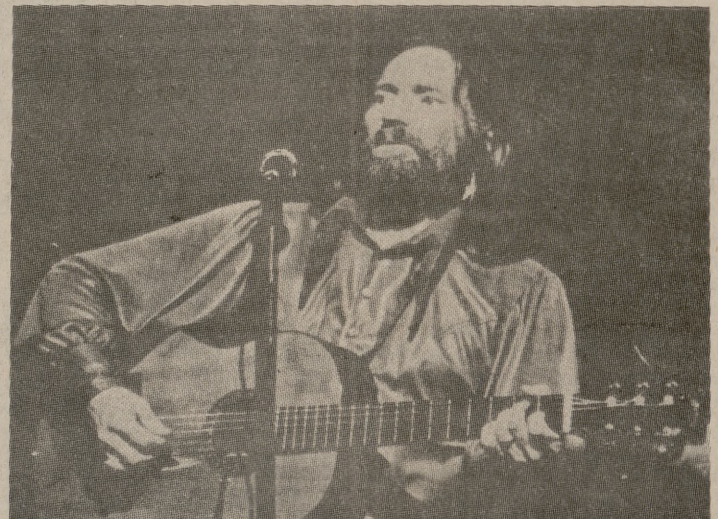
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