

Wiggins Calls For Orderly Transition

*FPost
8/27/74*

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of President Nixon's former chief defenders has now suggested that it is "time for the President, the vice president, the chief justice and the leaders of the House and Senate to gather in the White House to discuss the orderly transition of power from Richard Nixon to Gerald Ford."

If Nixon is impeached or resigns, that scenario by Rep. Charles Wiggins, R-Calif., would be pretty close to the actual transition to a new presidency.

If Nixon should decide to resign, it could be accomplished simply by transmitting a formal letter of resignation to the secretary of state.

However something a little more elaborate would be likely for the first resignation of an American president in the 185-year history of the office.

Should Nixon resign, he almost certainly would have vice president Ford present to take the oath as president immediately.

The reason is the practical need in the modern world situation to have a known leader at the helm of government at all times.

The procedure would be a little more cumbersome in the case of an impeachment conviction in the Senate, but not by much.

Technically Nixon would no longer be president the moment he was voted guilty on any one article of impeachment.

Presumably the judgment would be announced by the chief justice, who would preside

over the trial.

For all practical purposes the successor becomes president instantly upon the departure of his predecessor — whether by death, resignation or impeachment.

The office of vice president, however, would be vacant, but under the 25th Amendment it could be filled without waiting for an election.

Just as Nixon picked Ford to succeed Spiro Agnew, Ford could choose his own vice president.

Many officials of the Nixon administration — Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, for example — would likely stay on in a new Ford administration.

The more intimate White House staff would likely be replaced.

The outgoing president, meantime, could still be in deep trouble.

The Constitution provides that after impeachment "the party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to indictment, trial, judgment and punishment, according to law."

This means that a federal grand jury, which has already named Nixon as an unindicted co-conspirator in the Watergate cover-up case, would be free to indict him and send him to a criminal trial once he is removed from office.

The same would be true of a president who resigns.

In past cases, the Senate has dismissed the impeachment action against men no longer in office at the time of trial, and most likely this precedent would be followed.

Goldwater Attacks Television Reports

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., took the Senate floor Wednesday afternoon to denounce two television news reports concerning him which he said were "two damned lies."

Later, the senator's office issued a statement for him saying that NBC had reported Goldwater visited the White House Tuesday night and was refused admission.

The statement also said that Bob Clark, an ABC commentator, reported that Goldwater had told him that President Nixon was going to resign. Goldwater made his remarks

before he went to the White House in late afternoon.

Asked for comment on the remarks, an NBC spokesman said: "The senator is mistaken. NBC did not report that he had visited the White House and was refused admission. What NBC News did report was that Sen. Goldwater wanted to arrange a meeting with President Nixon but that the meeting was not arranged. We stand on that report."

An ABC spokesman, asked for comment, said: "Clark has been in touch with his original source.