

Agnew's resignation, which would not have been surprising a while back, was somewhat of a surprise when I heard it announced. There has been little time to think about it, but it does have a number of vital consequences, in the immediate and in precedent, because of the changed succession. One of the few things I've thought about, largely because of the situation and because I've felt since about January that this was the Nixon objective, is who Nixon will pick to be v.p.

Here his needs are the key. The kind of President he has been eliminates the need for a President. But that kind of president wants very much to have an influence on who will succeed him, assuming he does not intend to avoid any succession, not an impossibility but a possibility that seems less likely to me that it did in May.

Because I haven't had a chance to separate this and think it through, my feelings are not strong enough to justify a certainty. I believe that his preference is for Connally because Connally best serves all Nixon's interests. The question is will he dare pick so big a fight with Congress over a man widely disliked in both parties? And with Connally, the question has to be does he really want it now? Would he be tarred by the blackness of the Nixon record if he were to become v/p/ now and have to run on the Nixon record, at least from here out? Connally is smart in a rough way, but I've seen no genuine feeling or subtlety in him. A truly sophisticated politician would not take the job now. Connally is overly ambitious, and this may tilt him into what could be an unwise hunt move.

So, because Nixon is smart in the ways of the dirtiest in politics, maybe he'll make Connally's decision for him and not nominate him. In that event, he would want what I think he now has most need of anyway, another Agnew. He did not select Agnew by accident or in ignorance. To improve the chances in the Congress, one from there has advantages. From what I know of them, the one with least principle, absolutely no scruple, and no prospect of getting elected to any higher post of Gerald Ford. He is the hack's hack. He is capable of saying anything and always does. (See PW, WWI). There is no limit to his viciousness, witness his joint appearances with Scott when they used to leave the White House. Nor is he smooth, which could embarrass Nixon. He doesn't even use more words, or any of them better. He is a kind of pale Nixon, without the daring and the ability with all that is evil.

I think selecting someone from Congress would be a wise move and would be misconstrued as an olive branch, which he could use now.

I also think Nixon made up his mind long ago but will pretend otherwise. There was little point in getting ready to off Agnew without being ready for what followed. ~~Hazard~~ Nor would it be wise not to be fully prepared, not to have to make hasty, last-minute decisions. GL will recall what the papers never do, the wisdom of Colson's caution, we don't know where all the copies are. Because he was inaccessible to almost all, including those supposedly close to him, because he is not comfortable with people, and because he could leave his hair down with only a few, everything had to go on paper.

God! What a fire there could be in the next administration! This could be a coup factor not considered, by itself are as motivation for an attempted coup.

As the fascism is Ameriform, so also would the coup have to be. The natural villain, unless there are significant developments (USSR, not China) is the Congress. He has been attacking it all along. There is always the possibility of sending the plumbers out to make a leak, too.

This Agnew hiatus will not last long. There is always a question with the side issue of the tapes. He dares not let untainted ones out. The decision has been delayed, so the court is not finding it easy. There is always the danger that other developments not seen by the press will out. Even his crookedness could boil over. It was not done with craft, in either sense. It was raw, Hitlerian, not cunning. Agnew-like. So, he can still have the most serious troubles ahead of him. The WG committee has been forced to go back and pick up some of what it suppressed. There is always a danger here, at least for close to five months, when it expires.

He needs his own kind of guy more than he need an abler one, so Ford or a Ford may be more likely than Connally or a Connally.