

NYTimes
Letters to the Editor
Of the President and the Presidency

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To the Editor:

Impeachment proceedings are not a benign exercise but have the potential of seriously polarizing the body politic and compromising the effectiveness of the executive branch of government. Wisely, the Constitution requires a two-thirds vote of the Senate for conviction, and, in view of the exhaustive Watergate committee hearings, the Senate is substantially well-informed as to the nature of the charges that would probably be brought against the President.

The indication is that the chance for conviction is slight and, therefore, continued efforts by militant members of Congress serve only to create political crisis and handicap governmental activity.

Looking beyond President Nixon's tenure is the creation of a contemporary precedent that would encourage any willful Congressional majority to seek to replace or to compromise the effectiveness of a President who has lost its favor.

The necessity for impeachment proceedings should be so obvious that a successful conviction is anticipated. Today, this crystal-clear situation does not exist, and it is appalling to know that groups, often long-time critics of the President's domestic and foreign policies, are actively lobbying for impeachment. Those engaged in these maneuvers are in essence seeking a change in executive leadership by bypassing the normal electoral process.

The futile transgressions of the Nixon staff constitute one tragedy. A greater tragedy will evolve if the ultimate mandate for executive office, the free national election, is successfully circumvented by a political opposition.

JOSEPH M. BENNETT, M.D.
 Hicksville, L. I., Nov. 3, 1973

To the Editor:

Clark Clifford put it well when he said that there is a profound and pressing need for action that will restore the people's confidence in their Government [Op-Ed Oct. 29]. The American people need to have a Government in whose competence and integrity they can trust, and they are entitled to have it now.

Mr. Clifford has come up with a means to accomplish this which has one defect: Its success is dependent upon Mr. Nixon's cooperation, and it is evident that Mr. Nixon is not disposed to heed the call "For God's sake—go."

In the absence of a confirmed Vice President, the next in line of succession is Speaker Albert, who has stated that he does not desire to serve as President. The key to the installation of a President of outstanding ability and character lies in the speakership.

The Constitution provides that "the House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other Officers." Neither the Constitution nor the rules of the House require that the Speaker be a member of the House any more than they require that the Clerk, the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Parliamentarian

and the other officers of the House be members of Congress.

Let the bipartisan leadership of the Senate and the House find and select a man of the caliber that Mr. Clifford suggests. Then elect that man Speaker, whether he be a Senator, a Governor, a Representative or a private citizen, and, at the time of resignation or of impeachment, a government in which all can have confidence can be installed in a constitutional manner.

RICHARD H. WELLS
 New York, Oct. 30, 1973

To the Editor:

It is not likely that Mr. Nixon will resign. The act is not in keeping with his temper.

It is not unreasonable, though, to think that he would listen to his physician and retire to one of his homes for six months or so in preparation for a visit to the leaders of the major nations. He could then return in triumph in 1976. In the meantime, the Vice President would be Acting President.

The solution would be good for his health and for the nation's health; it would require no drastic actions or decisions; it would free him from problems stemming from Watergate, and it would allow him to assume a role he prefers above all others. We would not have to make fundamental constitutional decisions and would not risk dividing the Congress or the country.

PAUL WEISS
 Heffer Professor of Philosophy
 Catholic University of America
 Washington, Nov. 4, 1973

To the Editor:

Saying something is so, even daily, doesn't make it so.

For weeks now the editorials and columnists of The Times have loudly and at times savagely told us that the President has lost his capacity to govern. If this is so, how does one explain Congress' inability to override the President's vetoes of not a few pieces of major legislation, many of them supported by The Times? Surely this does not betoken a weakened executive.

Moreover, it seems to me that the President has shown in international affairs a far firmer and surer hand than those of his more recent predecessors. While it is too early to be sure, certainly Mr. Nixon's handling of the Mideast situation appears to be successful and is not at all the action of a powerless President.

His complicity in Watergate, which has yet to be proven, would surely be reprehensible, but on balance I would prefer to keep Mr. Nixon in office, if only because of his demonstrated abilities in foreign relations.

If the President's power to govern is in fact impaired. I submit that this is in great measure due to the effect of the media's insistent and unremitting allegations, and not to actual failures on his part.

REM V. MYERS
 Huntington, L. I., Nov. 5, 1973