

Goldwater Won't Become a Patsy



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A NYBODY who is waiting for Barry Goldwater to call on Richard Nixon to resign had better not hold his breath.

Ever since it began to appear, last fall, that pinning a specific crime on the President was unlikely, bar some highly suspect plea bargaining by his former aides, opinion among his critics has been divided. One school of thought has lobbied for Mr. Nixon's impeachment.

The trouble with that strategy is that many Congressmen cannot be persuaded to take impeachment so lightly. Even Pete McCloskey, the maverick Republican from California who has introduced his own resolution calling for Mr. Nixon's impeachment, said last June on the floor of the House that no member should vote for it unless he is personally convinced that Mr. Nixon is guilty and ought to be removed from office.

In the light of such statements, the House is not likely to vote to impeach Mr. Nixon, whatever its Judiciary Committee may recommend, and his conviction and removal by the Senate seems even more remote.

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THAT IS WHY another wing of anti-Nixon opinion has opted, instead, to call for his resignation. Never mind the technicalities (so goes this argument); the President's ability to lead the nation has been fatally undermined by Watergate, etc. Gerald Ford's confirmation as Vice President points the way to a restoration of public confidence without fundamental changes of policy. For the good of the

country, Nixon should resign.

The fly in this particular ointment is, of course, Mr. Nixon's stubborn refusal to cooperate. And that's where Barry Goldwater was supposed to come in. From the very start, the outspoken Senator from Arizona — a pillar of conservatism, a longtime supporter of Mr. Nixon's, and certainly beyond suspicion of any ulterior motive — has called for Mr. Nixon to come clean on Watergate, and has grumbled audibly when he failed to do so.

Small wonder that Goldwater seems (as indeed he is) the logical leader of any group of Republicans who might decide to call on Mr. Nixon and ask him to step down. This idea strikes liberals, especially, as so felicitous that Goldwater, whom they have despised and laughed at for years, has recently been enjoying a sort of Indian-summer upswing in personal popularity and esteem. Good old Barry, a lot of his former foes seem to be saying; he'll pull us through.

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BUT RECENT statements by the craggy Arizonan make it clear that, while frankly gloomy about the political consequences of Watergate for the GOP, and privately annoyed at White House bungling of its relations with him, Goldwater is not going to be the patsy of Mr. Nixon's critics, any more than he has been Mr. Nixon's.

So it's back to the drawing board for Mr. Nixon's critics. If Mr. Nixon is going to be ousted, they are going to have to go in and get him themselves.