

Announcer: Another member of the U.S. Senate called for President Nixon's resignation today, but this time it was one of Nixon's strongest supporters, conservative Republican Sen. James Buckley of New York....

Buckley (voice): For months now I have been struggling to sort out the deeper implications of what is so inadequately called the Watergate affair, and to determine what I myself am called upon to do. As the result of a long and painful study, I now feel impelled by a duty to my country, to my constituents and to my Beliefs, to state plainly the conclusion that I have reached. The stage has now been reached at which Americans must come to terms with Watergate, if Watergate is not to end up drowning all of us. The Watergate affair can no longer be thought of as merely a troublesome episode such as occurs from time to time in the political history of every country. It had its faint [?] origin in what was, itself, a trivial and foolish incident, but from this minor incident, as has so often happened before in history, Watergate has expanded on a scale that has plunged our country into what historians call a crisis of the regime. A crisis of the regime is a disorder, a trauma involving every tissue of the nation, conspicuously including its moral and spiritual dimensions. The outward signs of the depth of the crisis are obvious: The unparalleled downfall and departure of virtually the entire inner staff of the head of government, the formal initiation of impeachment proceedings, the confessions, indictments and trials. Yet, at the very heart of the crisis are things which cannot easily be catalogued, for they consist of self-truths, which do not lend themselves to the confines of charts, and graphs and polls and headlines. I speak of the spreading cynicism about those in public life and about the political process itself. I speak of the pervasive and undeniable sense of frustration and impotence that has become the dominant political mood in the nation. I speak of a perception of corruption that has effectively destroyed the President's ability to speak from a position of moral leadership, and I speak of the widespread conviction that Watergate and all that it has brought in its wake has done unique and perhaps irrevocable damage to our system of government. There is one way and one way only by which the crisis ~~may be~~ can be resolved and the country pulled out of the Watergate slump. I propose an extraordinary act of statesmanship and courage, an act at once noble /and heartbreaking, ~~and~~ at once serving the greater interest of the nation, the institution of the presidency, and the stated goals for which he so successfully campaigned. That act is Richard Nixon's own, voluntary resignation as President of the United States.

[Announcer interpolates that Buckley announced this at a news conference this morning after sending a copy of it to Nixon the day before, without getting a response].

Buckley (voice): Self-evidently, the impeachment process would end. Congress would be automatically discharged of the Watergate affair and could devote itself to its legislative business. A new President would be at the helm, with the capacity to inspire and restrain the Congress, to reach out to the people with a restored authority and moral strength that is so essential an ingredient of the Presidency.

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I ~~walk~~ that there is an argument against resignation which might best be summed up in the injunction to "bear those ills we have than fly to others we know not of." To this argument, I can only reply that it is not given to us to ~~predict the future~~ be able to predict the future. But it is demanded of us that we obey the dictates of reason and conscience, and this is what I have attempted to do. I cannot guarantee that the course I have recommended will bring our nation tranquility, but it will most certainly free our nation from the particular spiritual crisis that Watergate has made the central political fact of our time.

[Announcer says sources on Capitol Hill have told ~~facifica~~ that Buckley's decision to split with Nixon follows a secret Republican poll which shows that "if things continue, Watergate-wise, as they are, the Republicans will have only 49 seats in the House by the time the November elections are over.]

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