

Buckley Urges Nixon to Resign

Washington

Senator James L. Buckley, a conservative Republican who strongly supports President Nixon's policies, called yesterday for Mr. Nixon's resignation to preserve the presidency and pull the nation "out of the Watergate swamp."

At a packed news conference in the Senate Caucus Room that was the scene of last year's Watergate hearings, Buckley said Mr. Nixon's resignation would at once serve "the greater interests of the nation, the institution of the presidency and the stated goals for which he so successfully campaigned."

He said Watergate has created an unparalleled national crisis that impeachment can never resolve. "If the President withdrew," Buckley said, "this crisis would be resolved."

Buckley, whose term expires in 1976, said he had received some support and some opposition in private talks with fellow GOP conservatives. Two of them, Senators Barry Goldwater of Arizona and Jesse Helms of North Carolina, promptly opposed his call, but said they would favor resignation if Mr. Nixon is guilty.

Party conservatives have been Mr. Nixon's chief supporters.

Buckley said he hopes his stand will have some impact on Mr. Nixon because it comes "from quarters that are basically friendly to the President, sympathetic to what he has tried to advance."

Buckley said he expects pressure for Mr. Nixon's resignation to increase but "I'm not going to go campaigning for people to join me."

Senator Edward W. Brooke of Massachusetts is the only other Republican senator to call for Mr. Nixon's resignation.

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on's resignation. Unlike Brooke, a liberal, Buckley is, as he described himself, "a life-long Republican who has worked actively for Richard Nixon."

He was elected to the Senate in 1970 with the administration's help as the candidate of New York's Conservative party, defeating liberal Republican Senator Charles E. Goodell and a Democrat, Richard Ottinger.

As one who saw in Mr. Nixon's 1972 victory "both the mandate and the opportunity to carry forth reforms of historic significance for the nation," Buckley said, "today, just 16 months later, it is my conviction that the President has been stripped of the ability to fulfill that mandate."

Warning that a prolonged impeachment debate would only exacerbate the situation, Buckley said, "There is only one way and one way only by which the crisis can be resolved, and the country pulled out of the Watergate swamp."

Buckley stressed that he shares Mr. Nixon's desire to preserve the presidency's powers, saying "The only way to save it is for the current President to resign, leaving the office free to defend itself with a new incumbent."

Buckley said his position was taken "regardless of innocence or guilt" of the President and that, in the event of an impeachment trial, "The country will be in for a trauma the dimensions of which the country has not thought through."

Goldwater, in a statement, said he understands Buckley's feeling but that "too many questions arise when it comes to asking for the resignation of President Nixon," including the danger of such a precedent.

"While I do not join with



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SENATOR JAMES L. BUCKLEY
Conservative had supported Nixon policies

Senator Buckley in his request at this time," Goldwater said, "I wish to make it plain that if any evidence of a criminal act on the part of the President is proven, I shall change my position and support the Buckley proposal."

"If the President is guilty, he should resign," Helms said. "On the other hand, if he honestly feels that he is innocent, then he should stand his ground."

Senate Republican Leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, asked about Buckley's statement, said, "I think it expresses the conviction of a very conscientious and very honorable senator."

"Resignation to me is a nonanswer," said Republican National Chairman George Bush. "I worry about the instability that resignation, without proof of guilt, brings to our system. Let the system work. Let the Judiciary Committee promptly do its work."

Vice President Gerald R.

Ford told reporters he does not believe Mr. Nixon should resign.

"There are no proven charges against him," Ford said. "And resignation under these circumstances would be ill advised."

Senator Charles H. Percy (Rep-Ill.) said that Buckley's statement makes the situation "more perilous" for the President and that if Mr. Nixon does not resign Congress will have no choice but to continue the impeachment process.

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