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Of Mr. Nixon's TV Plea

To the Editor:

I believe that the President of the United States should have the use of nationwide television for questions of national security, foreign affairs or domestic problems at any time he feels it is important or necessary to go to the public for information or for support. However, I do not believe it was the intention of the people, of the networks or of former Presidents that at any time any President could plead a personal, legal and even perhaps criminal case over nationwide television.

This not only violates the concepts of freedom of the press, freedom of speech and whatever other bases on which rests the idea that the President can go to the public and dominate the media, but it absolutely eliminates the concept of equal time. Who in the world can qualify for equal time unless he or his institution is in the same legal difficulties?

It seems to me that the citizens of this country ought not to accept the idea that their leadership can demand time to dominate the media to talk of personal affairs, subjecting them to a man under great suspicion of criminal acts plead his own personal case. This case is now in the hands of the House Judiciary Committee, and I believe the TV networks should have refused to carry this live theater since it could very well prejudice the impartial, objective approach of the House committee.

Access to television, or any other medium, to the leadership of the country was to my understanding intended for the enlightenment of the population on subjects that concerned each of us vitally and in which we as an electorate have a distinct voice.

To my view, our voice has been heard in our elected representatives initiating the impeachment investigation. The public has all the information and has a mandated elected Congressional committee acting in its behalf.

What was the purpose of the President's appearance on April 29 other than to prejudice and influence his own case? If he were truly concerned with the protection of the office of the Presidency, he would not have dared to appear on television as an individual President pleading with his country to overlook events that have little to do with the present problems of American citizens either at home or abroad.

The events he pleaded for so movingly and emotionally are already in the hands of competent elected officials. All we can hope is that our elected officials are not influenced by these pleadings.

MAURINE ROTHSCHILD  
New York, April 30, 1974