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From an editorial, May 8, 1974:

The World-Herald three times endorsed Richard Nixon as a candidate for the presidency. We think still that his administration has a great deal to its credit . . .

Important as these accomplishments are, they are overshadowed now by the appallingly low level of political morality in the White House, as indicated in a variety of ways in recent months and confirmed now in damning detail by the White House tapes.

The transcripts have diminished the President's image from that of a moral man surrounded by underlings who had betrayed him to that of an amoral man who compounded his troubles by withholding for more than a year the shocking truth about the mess he and his administration were in . . .

The President said it was the presidency he was protecting. There was the principle of confidentiality. He must protect it. National security was being breached or threatened. He must protect that.

No doubt some of these matters did involve national security. But were all his actions based on such high ground?

The thrust of the 1,303 pages of the transcript is that the President was trying to save his own skin and would consider almost any option, however bizarre, if it would help him do that . . .

Involved here is not a question of Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative, or of a conspiracy by his enemies to "get" the President. This is a matter of right or wrong, telling the truth or not telling the truth.

Is the President impeachable? That is for the House to decide. On the narrow issue of criminality, the tapes may be inconclusive so far as the President is concerned. But the issues here are broader than criminality, or presidential credibility against John Dean's credibility.

It is a truism to say—but apparently it needs to be said—that an individual's conduct may be indefensible and reprehensible without being criminal.

We think resignation is a course much to be preferred to impeachment. Impeachment could result in months and months of additional charges and countercharges, accumulating bitterness and, very possibly, an inconclusive decision. (What if, for example, the House votes to impeach and a majority—but not the necessary two-thirds of the Senate votes to remove the President from office?) . . .

Some will ask what other Presidents would have done under similar circumstances. They will say that "dirty tricks" and Watergate breakins and coverups are "just politics." To which we would reply:

If the revolting picture of conniving and deception revealed by the White House tapes is "just politics" as practiced in the Oval Office of the President of the United States, it is time for the present occupant to vacate that office.

Let a new occupant establish a new level of political morality for the presidency of the United States.

The President should resign.