

**For Differing Reasons, Both Parties
Now Favor the Impeachment Process**

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WASHINGTON, May 15—The Democrats would appear likely to benefit in the November elections if Mr. Nixon stays in office through the summer. Should he leave now, one House member said, Vice President Ford would have enough time to reconstruct the Republican image and perhaps avoid the big Republican losses now expected.

News

Analysis

that the proper way to resolve Mr. Nixon's Watergate agony is to allow the constitutional impeachment process to go forward.

The public explanations of this attitude are uniformly high-minded: Resignation would set a damaging precedent, under which future Presidents might be hounded from office for mere unpopularity. Resignation would leave a substantial part of the country bitter and dissatisfied. Resignation denies the President his right to due process of law.

Chance to Survive

Many of those who have advanced these explanations seem entirely sincere. But, as is inevitably the case in such situations, there are also unspoken, political calculations and motivations at work.

The White House, obviously, prefers impeachment to resignation because it offers Mr. Nixon the chance to survive in the Presidency. Also, Mr. Nixon's advisers, while privately pessimistic about his chances in the House of Representatives, remain convinced that he will win the ultimate test in the Senate.

Congressional Democrats see a number of political advantages in avoiding appeals for Presidential resignation—and the party's top leadership, including the national chairman, Robert S. Strauss; the Senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana, and the Speaker of the House, Representative Carl Albert of Oklahoma, is working hard to build party unity on the question.

Eye on Elections

For one thing, several Senators said privately, they can seem statesmanlike and insulate themselves from charges of leading a partisan lynch mob if they stay cool for the moment. Newspaper and television investigations, and the proceedings of the House Judiciary Committee, are certain to keep the question of Mr. Nixon's fate before the public without assistance from others.

Equally important to many Democratic officeholders, the

The one big problem with the Democratic strategy is this: Should the electorate conclude that the party leadership in Congress is stalling in the hope of wringing the maximum electoral advantage from the Watergate scandals, there might be a backlash.

As for the Republicans, most of the are loath to appear disloyal to the man who still leads their party, at least until they have a better idea of the evidence that will be presented against Mr. Nixon. This reluctance is underlined by their feelings that attempts to persuade the President to quit are quixotic anyway at this stage.

Reason for Split

Their big problem, of course, is the fear that Mr. Nixon and Watergate will produce a disaster for the party at the polls this fall. Thus, as Senator Norris Cotton, Republican of New Hampshire, suggested the other day, it is no coincidence that several of the Republican Senators who have broken ranks to call for resignation face potentially difficult contests for re-election.

Among those are Senators Marlow W. Cook of Kentucky, Richard S. Schweiker of Pennsylvania and Milton R. Young of North Dakota.

The sudden near-unanimity on the question of resignation does not mean that a new spate of appeals for the President to quit may not be heard later—perhaps this summer, after the Judiciary Committee has acted or after the House has voted. Senator Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, has repeatedly suggested that the President might decide without prompting to resign if the House voted to impeach him.

Nor does the absence of new appeals for resignation appear to indicate that the President's position is stronger. In decrying the idea of resignation, few Senators of either party have defended Mr. Nixon's conduct in the Watergate matter, and the possibility that he could be impeached, convicted and removed from office is taken more seriously than ever in Congressional circles.