

What They Are Saying of Mr. Clifford's

In an article appearing on this page June 4, Clark Clifford called for a "government of national unity" to replace the Nixon Administration. The Clifford Plan, based on the 25th Amendment, proposed that President Nixon and Vice President Agnew announce their intention to resign. After Mr. Agnew's resignation, President Nixon would ask Congress to name three persons, one of whom he would appoint to the Vice-Presidency. There would be no restrictions on the background of the three persons. Once the new Vice President was confirmed by Congress, Mr. Nixon would resign and the new Vice President would assume the Presidency. The only caveat would be that the new President consent not to run for re-election in 1976. The following letters are in response to the Clifford Plan.

To the Editor:

This [Clifford] article is, in my opinion, one of the most insidious as well as treasonable utterances yet expressed by those persons seeking on the unfortunately conceived action of a group whose efforts were prompted by their desire to uncover subversive practices for which the object of their search has been so noted, to undermine the work of a man who is without question the most honest and loyally oriented President this country has had since Theodore Roosevelt.

Why your paper is so ready to print the vapid outpourings of men like Muskie, Humphrey, Jackson and Ted Kennedy along with those of renegades like Percy, Weicker and McCloskey has long been a puzzle to me and, I am certain, to many others. The first four mentioned long since forfeited any confidence that may have at one time been held in their veracity. Renegades like Percy and Weicker do not have the courage to tell their real reason for their attitude, which is simply that the companies in which there is such concern on their part, financially, do not any longer enjoy the fat war contracts which were so profitable to them.

President Nixon's accomplishments have been so outstanding in bringing our Vietnam debacle to a virtual close; in bringing about rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China; in bringing business at home to a high level of prosperity; in disposing of the huge surpluses of farm products; that it is only to be expected that the forces that constantly seek to destroy our country would grasp any straw to keep their ship of disloyalty from foundering.

Have you got the nerve to print the truth?
CHARLES P. LOVELAND
Scarsdale, N. Y.

To the Editor:

Clark Clifford's article proposing the resignation of President Nixon is in itself an affront to the American code of justice that holds innocence until proven guilty as its cornerstone.

His further proposal that Vice President Agnew also resign simply because he is part of the Nixon Administration has to be considered sheer demagoguery and knavery.

This type of thinking on the part of supposedly responsible and respected men is the greatest danger our country faces. The Constitution and its amendments have served us well and when we begin to tamper with its provisions and trample its traditions, we are veering sharply toward government by fiat and whim which is a sure road to fascism.

THOMAS MICHAEL DESMOND
Massapequa, L. I.

To the Editor:

Despite the seriousness of the subject, I couldn't help but be amused at the naiveté of Mr. Clark Clifford. Does Mr. Clifford really believe that the Richard Nixon of Jerry Voorhis and Helen Gahagan Douglas fame would make a "magnanimous action" or show "unselfish dedication to the nation's good"?

Mr. Nixon's political career has not been marked by any noticeable ethical or moral standards. To believe that he would resign his life's goal for unselfish reasons is at the very least unrealistic.
SYLVIA DUNN SCHLAFF
Brooklyn

To the Editor:

Mr. Clifford's proposal is without question the very best solution for the welfare of this country and its people during the coming three-and-one-half years.

The only drawback is that both Mr. Nixon and Mr. Agnew have repeatedly demonstrated that their political positions and good fortune, their ego structure and power images, their total disregard for the will of the people and the welfare of the people are uppermost in their considerations. If this were not the case, Watergate and the other parts of the iceberg would never have existed.

I suggest that Mr. Clifford's plan be put to national referendum.

SARA S. LANDIS
New York City

To the Editor:

As Clark Clifford outlines in his well-reasoned argument for the resignation of both President Nixon and Vice President Agnew, the United States Constitution is a flexible document. There is yet another constitutional way in which a person of unquestioned integrity, sound administrative experience, impeccable credentials and with no political ambitions for 1976 can become President.

The rule of succession provides that the Speaker of the House become President if both the President and Vice President are no longer available for service. At the moment that Speaker is Carl Albert. It is unlikely that he could serve the purpose of unifying and leading the country in a nonpartisan manner.

However, in Article I, Section 2, the Constitution states that "the House shall choose their Speaker." The Constitution does not seem to require that the House must choose a Speaker from among its own members. The Speaker could be anyone. He or she need serve for only five minutes as Speaker (long enough for the resignations to be acted upon), and then Carl Albert could be re-elected as Speaker after the other person moves into the Presidency.

There is some question whether the method outlined by Mr. Clifford, since it places the ultimate responsibility for selecting a successor in President Nixon's hands, could achieve the purpose of removing all question of "partisan politics" from the new President's ascension. Leaving the matter entirely in the hands of Congress might have that effect.

MICHAEL SCOTT
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Plan

To the Editor:

I was appalled to read the article by Clark Clifford. What is this drivel coming from a man who has been prominent in the Government.

The United States is fortunate to have a Constitution which provides for the orderly removal of the President in case of wrongdoing on his part. This country can be well served if the law of the land is observed.

Obviously, Mr. Clifford puts his own suggestion above the Constitution of the United States. He has a long way to go to rival the Founding Fathers. I found his article to be truly offensive.

JOSEPHINE MANICONE
Old Tappan, N. J.

To the Editor:

I read with grim horror Clark Clifford's proposed solution for the Watergate tragedy, which he views with grim foreboding for the future of our country. To what depths of despair have some of our best brains sunk!

Fortunately, I have a high regard for Clark Clifford's sanity. Otherwise, I would think the plan a product of Rube Goldberg's twenty-fifth method of how to commit suicide, by tying a string to one's big toe on the left leg, and setting off a gun on the ceiling.

DR. MORRIS ZUCKER
Bronx, N. Y.

To the Editor:

Clark Clifford's solution to the Watergate crisis and method of insuring President Nixon's place in history is no doubt a thinking individual's response. However, the suggestion involves a myriad of maneuvers and politicking that would take up at least three-quarters of the balance of the Presidential term and that period of time would leave our nation in an even worse situation, as far as uncertainty, lack of leadership, and a generally malfunctioning bureaucracy.

Instead, I suggest that we "rally

'round the flag, boys," bring the Watergate situation to a close as quickly as possible, punish those who have misused power, or acted wrongly, and get back to running the country. This will do more to strengthen our morale and our belief in our system than Mr. Clifford suggests.

JOHN B. MCCARTHY
Fair Haven, N. J.

To the Editor:

Clark Clifford's article is another glaring example of the unrealistic, naive, even childish thinking swirling around the Presidency and the President in these sad and tragic Watergate days.

I fully agree with his conclusions that Watergate has resulted in a deep loss of confidence in the Government, that Mr. Nixon's credibility has been severely affected, that the President has treated Congress as an inferior branch of Government. The remedy suggested, however, is hardly one that is sound either factually or legally. Given Mr. Nixon's make-up, particularly an all-pervading streak of stubbornness when confronted by crisis, it is hardly likely that he would surrender.

Mr. Clifford, probably with tongue in cheek, suggests that, by resigning, Mr. Nixon would be assured his place in American history. What place, one must ask? A resignation under these circumstances would only consign him to the very darkest page in our history.

Mr. Clifford is not really anxious to assure Mr. Nixon an honorable, or as he puts it, a noble place in our history. Quite the contrary, he is, even at this date, before all the evidence is in, ready to find him guilty on all counts. That may well prove to be the case. But, until the hearings of the Ervin Committee and the investigation by Archibald Cox have been completed, we should endeavor to allow the normal processes of Government to continue as best they may, with as little recrimination as humanly possible.

It serves no useful purpose at this time to speculate on the course to take in the event of adverse findings by either the Select Committee or by the Special Prosecutor.

IRVING SWEET
New York City

To the Editor:

The Op-Ed article by Clark Clifford is far and away the best, most feasible and most hopeful proposal yet for getting our nation out of its present tragic situation. Is there anything that can be done to get President Nixon to read the article—and, not least, the next to the last paragraph?

J. THOBURN LEGG
Sharon, Conn.

To the Editor:

The flaw in Clark Clifford's proposal is that Mr. Nixon, by the very behavior which warrants his resignation, has demonstrated his inability to choose men wisely. The arrangement that Mr. Clifford proposes should be modified to permit Congress to decide on the incumbent's successor as President of the United States.

MORTON A. MILLER
Hartford, Conn.

To the Editor:

*If to a king there happened Watergate
I'm sure he'd quickly abdicate
But the Constitution by design
Permits the President only to resign.
I doubt*

That he will take this out.

HARRY GOLDSMITH
Upper Montclair, N. J.

To the Editor:

Amidst the gloom of the Watergate Affair and the doubts it raises about the future of the country, Mr. Clifford's article was a welcome ray of hope. For a man who has spent all his energies in the political arena and has attained the "crown" of the Presidency of the United States, stepping down would be a most difficult gesture. But I do believe Mr. Nixon's credibility would be enhanced by such an action, the sincerity of his motives affirmed. And to a man who is so conscious of his place in history, such a grand exit might be sufficient enticement.

Mr. Nixon could give us our most essential birthday present.

WILLIAM A. WHITE
Staten Island

To the Editor:

I don't want to be "governed" by The New York Times nor by The Washington Post.

You were not elected by the American people—nor will you be. Yet you will use every dirty trick in the editorial "book" to chase from the Presidency (if you can) Richard Nixon—who was elected by a landslide.

You have overblown the Watergate case in a deliberate attempt to create a governmental crisis—and use such "wheeler-dealers" as Clark Clifford to suggest a way in which Nixon and Agnew would (could) "step down" for a President and Vice President of your choice, no doubt.

And your "leak" of John Dean's supposed testimony that President Nixon was involved in the first four months of this year in more than 30 discussions of the cover-up aspect of the Watergate case. Your story (second-hand) was carried by UPI (third-hand) with an acknowledgement in paragraph 13 that "According to the Post, Dean has no documentation to back up his claims."

You blow up, create mountains out of molehills. It's all very evident.

You and yours have helped to destroy the secrecy of the grand jury. And you are destroying any possibility that an impartial (unbiased) jury could be drawn to hear Watergate cases.

If your colored cases are as strong as you would like other people to believe, why don't you cry for "impeachment"? Cry long and loud. Then see what you get? Let's see how powerful you really are; then let's see what the American public does. Put it all on the line if you have the guts! I don't think you have.

E. L. ROBINSON
Liverpool, N. Y.

To the Editor:

As one of the overwhelming majority that voted for the Nixon-Agnew ticket after Watergate, I deeply resent the suggestion by Clark Clifford that Nixon and Agnew resign.

After all, it was to protect the Republic from the Clark Cliffords that we elected Nixon and Agnew. We are not so much interested in how they got in as in that they got in. To lose them now would be a disaster.

Granted, that, for the moment, all cards seem to be stacked against the President: a hostile prosecutor, a hostile investigative committee, a hostile press. He has won against these odds before, and I've got a hunch he will do it again.

BERT GOLDSMITH
New York City

To the Editor:

I am in complete agreement with Clark Clifford. We cannot get on with the nation's business while Nixon is acting like a cornered rat (as shown by the complete lack of results from his visit with Pompidou in Iceland).

Our Ship of State needs a new pilot now, and Mr. Clifford has shown how the change can be made quickly and constitutionally, before the end of the current fiscal year and in time for us to celebrate our freedoms' no longer being an endangered species on July 4, 1973.

FREDERIC C. SMEDLEY
New York City

To the Editor:

Perhaps Clark Clifford himself might like to be President? Maybe not a bad idea?

O. GREGORY BURNS JR.
New York City