

GOP may ask Nixon to resign

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WASHINGTON—Convinced that the "missing tapes" issue is a blow from which he cannot recover, key Republicans in Congress are considering whether to ask President Nixon to resign and debating how to do it. Some Republicans speculated that a delegation of party members, businessmen as well as politicians, may be sent to the White House.

Another influential GOP leader said Republicans facing re-election in 1974 might deliver the message.

Preliminary to such a move would be the confirmation of Rep. Gerald Ford as vice president.

"That's the key now—to get Ford into position," said one Republican who heretofore has been one of Nixon's staunchest supporters.

Meanwhile, at Key Biscayne, where Nixon is vacationing, White House spokesmen continued to insist yesterday that the President is giving no thought to resigning.

But pressure for him to leave office is mounting—especially from quarters which had once supported him most strongly:

- The Detroit News, the nation's largest circulation afternoon newspaper, pro-Nixon almost without deviation.

- Conservative columnist, editor and television personality William F. Buckley Jr.

- The Denver Post, which supported his re-election in an editorial a year ago today.

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- Columnist Joseph Alsop, who claimed, in addition, that Nixon had, before his news conference last week, toyed with the same conclusion.

At the same time, the New York Times, never friendly to Nixon but nonetheless the nation's most influential newspaper, also said he should leave office.

In an editorial today, the Times said "the last great service that Mr. Nixon can now perform for his country is to resign."

"He has been trying to 'tough it out' for too long at too great a cost to the nation," the Times said. "As long as he clings to office, he keeps the presidency swamped in a sea of scandal and the American public in a morass of concern and confusion."

Much of the pressure growing within Congress for Nixon to quit comes from the House, historically friendlier to the White House than the Senate.

House Republicans are reacting to the unprecedented flood of anti-Nixon mail and telegrams that started within hours of what has come to be known as the "Saturday Night Massacre" — the President's dismissal of Archibald Cox as special Watergate prosecutor and the resulting resignations of his attorney general and deputy attorney general.



—UPI Photo

President Nixon, right, joined Robert Abplanalp, left, and C.G. (Bebe) Rebozo on Rebozo's houseboat yesterday. But they cut short their cruise after they found they were being trailed by two other boats carrying photographers.

Same photo in folder of Nixon photos, 17 Jan 74; similar photo from slightly different angle, Newsweek 19 Aug 74, p. 45, this file (under date of 12 Aug 74.

The mail is continuing — up to 98 percent of it against the President.

Rep. Robert H. Michel, chairman of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee, acknowledged that House and Senate cloakrooms are full of talk about the possibility of Nixon's resignation. That is why, he said, most legislators are primarily concerned with disposing of the Ford confirmation.

And Rep. John B. Anderson of Illinois, chairman of the House Republican Conference, said even congressmen who were previously reluctant to consider impeachment must do so now "on an evidentiary basis."

"The burden of proof," he said, "has shifted to the administration" to convince the public that it is telling the truth.

The Detroit News's editorial called "the matter of the tapes" the "final disillusionment" that "makes three more years of a Nixon administration too bleak, too dangerous, a prospect."