

# Excerpts From the Statement by Aiken

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 7—  
Following are excerpts from  
a statement made in the Sen-  
ate today by Senator George  
D. Aiken, Republican of Ver-  
mont:

Ever since last March, when the series of events, real and imagined, wrapped up in the word "Watergate" began to dominate our public life, I have issued no prepared statements on this subject.

I have not spoken out because, in company with millions of others, I haven't discovered an easy way of escaping our present predicament. I don't want to contribute in any way to the destruction of the third Presidency in a row.

## Poisoning the Wells

At the same time, the White House has handled its domestic troubles with such relentless incompetence that those of us who would like to help have been like swimmers searching for a way out of the water only to run into one smooth and slippery rock after another.

I am speaking out now because the developing hue and cry for the President's resignation suggests to me a veritable epidemic of emotionalism. It suggests that many prominent Americans, who ought to know better, find the task of holding the President accountable as just too difficult.

Those who call for the President's resignation on the ground that he has lost their confidence risk poisoning the wells of politics for years to come.

## A 'Ridiculous Position'

Within less than 10 years, we have seen one Presidency destroyed by an assassin's bullet; another by a bitter and devious war. To destroy the third in a row through the politics of righteous indignation cannot possibly restore confidence either at home or abroad.

The men who wrote our Constitution were fully aware how waves of emotionalism, if given an easy electoral outlet, could reduce any political system to anarchy. That's why in a nation governed by its laws they provided that Presidents should rule for four years.

They laid down that that



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Senator George D. Aiken, Republican of Vermont, entering the Senate, where he spoke about impeachment of President Nixon.

period of rule could be interrupted only after Congress had framed a charge of high crimes and misdemeanors and had conducted a trial itself based on those charges. To ask the President now to resign and thus relieve the Congress of its clear Congressional duty amounts to a declaration of incompetence on the part of the Congress.

If I read correctly the signals sent out by the judicial branch of government, they are also saying that Congress

is the place where this crisis must be resolved.

The desperate search for a special prosecutor, with the virtues of Caesar's wife and the unfettered authority of her husband, only represents another effort to escape responsibility.

It makes no sense to me to ask the President to prosecute himself, yet any special prosecutor in the Justice Department will find himself in that ridiculous position.

Nor does it make sense to

me for the Congress to ask the judicial branch to create a special prosecutor.

Of course, if the President resigns, we will be relieved of our duty. But I fail to see any great act of patriotism in such a drama. On the contrary, it is the President's duty to his country not to resign.

The President's public explanations of the Watergate mess have been astonishingly inept. But this is not of itself an impeachable offense, nor does it suggest that the President be scolded, publicly, in the presence of a Congressional committee.

It is the clear duty of the House, through whatever procedures it chooses, to frame a charge of impeachment and to set itself a deadline for the task. If a charge is framed and voted, the Senate's clear duty is to proceed in a trial with all deliberate speed.

Since I would be a juror in such a trial, I intend to say nothing in advance about any possible indictment or any possible verdict.

## Righteous Indignation

Politicians I have known are no greater or less sinners than the average person listed in the telephone book. What bothers me much more are those who now would have us believe that President Nixon and his associates alone are the ones who corrupted America.

If the politics of righteous indignation succeeds in persuading the President to resign and relieving the Congress of its clear duty, how long will it be before our politics is corrupted by competitive self-righteousness?

I have spoken before of the dangers of moral aggression in foreign policy. That danger is clear and present now that the feuding families of the Middle East are at war again.

Only a fool would preach the politics of righteous indignation in the face of this grave tragedy.

Moral aggression here at home is hardly less dangerous than moral aggression in the Middle East.

May I now pass on to this Congress advice which I received from a fellow Vermonter — "Either impeach him or get off his back."