



The Chance That Nixon Will Resign

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IT BEGINS to seem more and more possible that President Nixon will resign. There will soon be a Republican vice president to step into the President's shoes, and the forces pushing Mr. Nixon toward resigning are growing stronger and stronger.

Some days ago, for instance, he received his staff's hair-raising report on the situation in the House Judiciary Committee. When the committee first began consideration of a bill of impeachment, a number of the senior House Democrats tried hard to arrange brief hearings and to achieve an early vote by the House as a whole. This would have favored the President greatly.

But now White House staff members are unable to offer hope of such a result. Instead, they predict investigations and hearings by the House Judiciary Committee will spin out for nearly a year, until next October.

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THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE'S left-wingers believe — almost certainly correctly — that long hearings will give them a better chance of getting a favorable committee report and a vote for a bill of impeachment in the House itself. Hence they want all the Watergate horrors to be aired at maximum length.

Furthermore, Mr. Nixon was told he could not count, in any absolute way, on the slender majority composed of the 17 Republicans and the four moderate-

to-conservative Democrats of the 21 Democrats on the committee. Four of the Republicans are novices elected by slender majorities.

The outcome will depend on the way that public opinion moves through the months ahead. The swing of public opinion could even produce a majority for impeachment in the House of Representatives itself, where there is nothing like a majority today.

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THERE IS a great deal of argument in Washington about the real thrust of opinion at the grass roots. Some members of the House and Senate report that their mail has turned rather abruptly in the President's favor. Yet the latest Gallup Poll showed an increase among those favoring the President's impeachment, to 37 per cent, while the Harris Poll showed 41 per cent hoping he would resign.

If the polls move sharply in the other direction, the Congress will follow the polls. Meanwhile, however, the President has to give further consideration to the resentment sure to be engendered by the energy crisis, and to the likelihood that this resentment will be further inflamed by an economic slump.

The real question is whether the President will wish to put the country through two or more years, or even longer, of the same kind of wringer the country is in today. It seems more and more possible he will not wish to do so, simply because he is a genuinely patriotic man.