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## A 'No Confidence' Vote To Fit Our Constitution

To the Editor:

Because the impeachment process has never worked well and may not do so now, we need a means to call a President to account—for political or other reasons—between regular Presidential elections.

One such device, whose creation would require a constitutional amendment, has long existed in parliamentary systems: the formal vote of no confidence. The United States could adapt this mechanism to its unique constitutional system as follows:

By a 60 per cent vote of both Houses, Congress could pass a resolution of no confidence when, in its estimation, the President could no longer govern or secure the interests of the nation. Such a vote would automatically trigger a special Presidential election in 120 days, a period sufficient to allow all parties to meet in convention to select Presidential candidates. The incumbent President could, of course, be nominated again, could run and might then be re-elected to serve out the four-year term. Should another be elected, he or she, too, would serve only the remainder of the term.

The procedure would not, as some might fear, create a parliamentary, rather than a Presidential, government. The chief executive would not be elected by Congress but, as he has always been, by the people. Congress itself would not be dissolved but would remain in session.

What would happen is that the President would be given a chance to reestablish his claim to govern; the Congress would regain some of its power to offset an irresponsible President; the major parties might regain some coherence and responsibility, and the people would have the chance to pass judgment on a crippled Administration before a long and critical span of four years had passed.

Britons and Europeans rightly marvel—and fear—the tendency of our system to retain rather than expel its maladroit or malign officials. It is time that the largest and most powerful democracy in the West find a new way to unburden itself and the world of Administrations which bring disrepute upon the nation or which are characterized, like the present one, by incompetence, malice and fraud.

JAMES M. BANNER JR.

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