

Rhodes Urges President Again to Consider Quitting

NYTimes

By CHRISTOPHER LYDON MAY 10 1974

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 9—The Republican leader in the House, John J. Rhodes of Arizona, said today that President Nixon should think again about resigning. His statement was part of mounting pressure against Mr. Nixon within his own party.

Representative John B. Anderson of Illinois, chairman of the House Republican Conference, said that unless the President resigned, "I would predict he would be impeached."

Rogers C. B. Morton, Mr. Nixon's Secretary of the Interior, said in a speech at Springfield, Mo., that "we have seen a breakdown in our national leadership." "We have seen a breakdown in our ethics of government, which I deplore and which I am having a very difficult time in living with," he said.

Mr. Rhodes neither recommended resignation nor predicted it in an hour's conversation over breakfast with reporters.

Adamant Against Resignation

But he argued that resignation was a "possible option" in the face of the "unfavorable" public reaction to transcripts of White House conversations on Watergate, further erosion of public confidence in the President and the growing chance of impeachment.

Mr. Nixon's departure and the succession of Vice President Gerald R. Ford would be "beneficial" for the Republican party this year, Mr. Rhodes said.

Again today White House spokesman said that Mr. Nixon was adamant against resigning. "The President will not quit

Continued on Page 17, Column 5

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5

even if hell freezes over," said Ren W. Clawson, the White House director of communications. Anne L. Armstrong, a counsellor to the President, said that Mr. Nixon was "very much against resignation. I think he has the guts to see it through in the proper way."

In advising Mr. Nixon to "reconsider," Mr. Rhodes noted the fresh opposition to the President from The Chicago Tribune, The Omaha World-Herald, the editor of the Hearst newspaper chain and other voices of conservative opinion. "Support of the people" is a necessary ingredient of democratic government, said Mr. Rhodes, a 57-year-old conservative who succeeded Mr. Ford as the House minority leader last year.

He continued: "When institutions as respected and powerful as those have changed their minds on the basis of the transcripts, perhaps people in the White House ought to consider that that basic element of a democracy is not present."

Mr. Rhodes's answers to newsmen offered a wide variety of direct and implicit sugges-



Associated Press

John J. Rhodes, House Republican leader, said that President Nixon should consider resignation.



Associated Press

Representative John B. Anderson, Illinois Republican, said resignation would benefit country.

tions that Mr. Nixon's resignation was as good a way as possible to end nearly two years of Watergate controversy.

"The content of the transcripts was devastating," he said, and whether or not they include evidence of an impeachable offense, the damage may be irreparable. "The effect of the transcripts is more a moral effect than an evidentiary ef-

fect," he said. "It will be very difficult to change the aspect involving morals."

Mr. Rhodes estimated that the chances of beating a bill of impeachment in the House have narrowed to "51-49, no."

As a lawyer, Mr. Rhodes said he agreed with those who see the full course of the impeachment process as the best means of reaching the truth.

But he said he was not sure that the process was worth the pain and delay, or could ever "settle the dust in this thing. I don't see that there's much choice between resignation and impeachment," he said. "It's going to be a traumatic experience whichever occurs, and the country is not going to get over it overnight."

Asked whether he thought Mr. Nixon could still operate effectively as President, Mr. Rhodes responded: "At the present moment I think he can. If the present trend continues, there will be some doubt about it. If the erosion continues, we might have to reconsider it."

Mr. Burch concluded: "The man who accomplished these things and much more is a great leader, a moral man, and a courageous American President."

"Like all great Presidents, he is not perfect. But he is not thus far to be impeached. He is determined to pursue the policies that have changed the face of the world dramatically in five short years until the end of his elected term of office."

The Los Angeles Times and The Cleveland Plain Dealer announced this evening that they would carry editorials against the President in tomorrow's editions.