

General Al, How about Whistling

By Art Buchwald

Capitol

Everyone has his own theory as to what will happen to President Nixon in the next few months. The obvious choices are impeachment, resignation or finish out his term. But there is still another choice, and while it is unthinkable, everything that's been happening is unthinkable, and therefore cannot be ruled out.

It is July 1, 1974. Gen. Al Haig comes into the Oval Office.

"Here are the latest Gallup and Harris polls. Only 2 per cent of the people in the United States still believe you've told the whole story about Watergate. What really bothers me though is that there are no more 'undecideds.'"

"That does it," the President says. "Let's implement 'Operation Banana Republic.'"

"You mean the 82nd Airborne Division?"

"Get them up here by tonight. You have the plans. I want them to take over the Capitol, the Supreme Court, The Washington Post and all three television

networks. I will make a speech tonight explaining what I've done."

"Yes, sir."

The President goes on television that night and says, "My fellow Americans, what I have to tell you tonight is of utmost importance to each and everyone of you. Because of recent events including character assassination, lies, distortions and vindictiveness by the media the Congress and my own Vice President, I have had to take action tonight which some of you may feel is extreme.

"I have promised you ever since the attacks on me that no matter what happened I would finish my term of office as President of the United States. Because of recent events I have decided the only way I can stay in office is by a military takeover of the government.

a Few Bars of 'Heil to the Chief'?

Punishment

It isn't an easy decision I make tonight. There are some, and they have a right to their opinion, who say that this is a violation of the Constitution. But I have been assured by my own Jesuit priest, Dr. McLaughlin, that what I am doing is not only legal but necessary, if I intend to complete my term of office.

"I would like to end tonight, my fellow Americans, on a personal note. If you don't like what I'm doing, you can lump it."

The next morning Gen. Haig comes into the Oval office with a long face.

"Whats the matter, Al?"

"Something's gone wrong, Mr. President."

"What do you mean? We had a military takeover and not one drop of blood was spilled."

"Nobody believes that you've taken over the government."

"How can they not believe it? Isn't the 82nd Airborne all over the city?"

"No one is impressed. We did an overnight poll and it turns out your credibility is so low that the people don't even buy it when you say you're taking over the government by force."

"But they've got to believe me," the President says angrily. "Don't they know I've arrested Congress?"

"Im sorry, sir. It won't work. You can't have a military takeover if the people aren't convinced that you've done it. Everyone we've talked to says it's just one more way you're trying to cover up your involvement with Watergate."

Nixon hits his desk with his hand. "It's typical of my enemies. They won't even let me have a military coup. What do I do now?"

Haig hands the President a sheet of paper, and says: "We have no choice."

"This says I'm going to resign because I can't govern effectively anymore?"

"That," says Haig, "people will believe."