

SF Examiner

AUG 4 1974

Resignation

The
unthinkable
becomes
thinkable

Newhouse News Service

WASHINGTON — President Nixon's resignation, despite strong White House denials that it is even being considered, is viewed here as a real possibility — and soon.

The resignation option enters into almost all congressional conversations that concern Nixon's predicament. Few now defend the argument that it is best for the country for him to remain in office and see the impeachment fight through to the end.

Many congressional Republicans say privately that Nixon's resignation now — before the House votes on the impeachment articles — is the only way he can avoid making worse the serious party split that has developed between pro- and anti-impeachment Republicans.

Sen. Edward Brooke of Massachusetts and James Buckley of New York, who called upon Nixon to resign

months ago, are now put in the category of political sages by some of their Republican colleagues.

Several separate legislative studies are under way on Capitol Hill to see what inducements can be offered Nixon to step aside.

The main legal impediment to resignation, it is believed, is the exposure to criminal prosecution Nixon might face once he loses his presidential protection against indictment. Some lawmakers believe there may be a way to grant Nixon immunity.

There was a general stirring when the President's chief of staff, Alexander Haig, said "at this juncture, I just don't foresee it," an apparent softening of the "never" position.

There were other signs — as Nixon's anti-impeachment support dwindled — that resignation was no longer an unthinkable thought in the White House.