

Byrd of Virginia Describes Call From Nixon Seeking Assurance

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 10 (UPI) — Senator Harry F. Byrd Jr., Independent of Virginia, said Saturday that he had received a telephone call from former President Richard M. Nixon early Friday, just four hours after Mr. Nixon told the nation he was resigning.

Senator Byrd said that he was asleep in his Washington apartment when the telephone awakened him at 1 A.M. Friday and an operator said, "just a minute, Senator Byrd, the President would like to speak with you."

"Harry," Senator Byrd recalled Mr. Nixon as saying, "I'm sorry to call you so late, but I've been kind of busy tonight. I just wanted to know if you feel I took the proper course."

Senator Byrd said that he told Mr. Nixon, "Mr. President, I feel confident you did what you thought was in the best interest of the country, and I think you made the proper decision."

Senator Byrd, who met Mr. Nixon in 1950, said the conversation lasted about five minutes. "It was a very nice talk," Senator Byrd said. "His voice was very strong. He sounded so much better than he had in the Cabinet room earlier in the evening."

Senator Byrd referred to a meeting in the Cabinet room at 8 P.M. Thursday, only an hour before Mr. Nixon told the nation he was stepping down. At the meeting were about 40 conservative members of Congress.

Senator Byrd said Mr. Nixon thanked the group "for support which, as he put it, made possible the ending of the Vietnam war and the return of the prisoners of war, and for making it possible to make appointments to the Supreme Court that he feels will bring it back closer to the center of the political spectrum from a more leftist position."

Senator Byrd said Mr. Nixon and others in the room wept at the end of the meeting.

"It was the first time I had seen the President in eight months," Senator Byrd said. "It had taken a heavy toll."