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Dear Jim,

Your excellent letter of the 15th, which raises questions I really should think through rather than feeling impressions about, comes at a fine time, a day when I don't feel in the mood for writing and when, with Lil working, I don't want to take advantage of the sun and get to more woodcutting because I am expecting call.

I haven't really gotten in to the woodcutting projects yet partly because I'm trying to get much on paper and partly because I dream of a development which might enable me to get one of the new, small chain saws. With our finances, it is highly improbable. It is the kind of satisfaction I'm sure you know to do this physical work. I've taken two large locusts down for their long Butt cuts, to be used to repair the weir that feeds the pond only to find that the neighbors who offered to help to move them into place have not come forth. So, I've cut all the posts from what remained, trimmed out all the finest brush, and dragged the rest to near the house where I have a chopping block and there cut what once would have made brush piles for burning into lengths that will fit the fire place. Now I'd decided to stockpile this because we may yet get a real crunch. Haven't started the fireplace up yet. I've even stockpiling the burnable trash to start fires with! However, GL would be proud of me. With several below-freezing nights and a number of days when the temperature didn't get to 50, in the past month we have used exactly 72 gals of fuel oil. I find that I am warm enough on getting out of bed in the wee hours to work the temperature up to what GL's doctor would say is a super-healthy 64° in easy increments. Days Lil works I have it off entirely and put more clothes on. Two sweaters now plus a pair of cheap Spanish Desert Books or Chukkas, whatever they are called, very light, above ankles, and on sale for \$2.88. Saturday Lil resurrected the long johns I used when farming, washed them, and when it is cold enough I'll wear them. I'm greasing in! We started this austerity regimen before the patriotic call, in deference to our finances, and it is working. Right now, at 11:40 a.m., there is no light burning anywhere in the house and there hasn't been since I took Lil into town. There won't be until she returns...I've been using only a 15" pruning saw and an old machete except where there is room to swing an axe. Sometimes the machete is better. But neither it nor the axe is congenial to shoulder bursitis. I guess I suffer a bit of GL's emotional makeup, there is compensation in this contest, the underequipped against all. We have already decided that if I can get a chain saw or if I can see my way clear to hire a kid with one, we'll burn much wood in the fireplace and when Lil doesn't have to use her office, I'll close the registers on most of the house. If I have to do it all by hand, it will be too much. But we are prepared, emotionally, that is, for a cold winter. You and I had those as kids anyway. I have often slept in rooms that could not be heated. And the place will be better for harvesting the trash trees. Also safer. We are a mark for an incendiary, political or psycho (one bad kid in neighborhood, arsonist, too.) The more I can clean up, the safer it will be.

We are close yet not in complete accord in impeachment. The optimist in me, at the outset, not allowing for the extent of GL's irrationality or the cowardliness of the press and the Congress (which is to say the degree, not the fact), and knowing what could emerge, did believe resignation was possible as an alternative to an unimaginable disaster/disclosure. My suspicions or what could out have been largely avilidated. But it has not come out and will not, in all probability not after I put it all together. Since then I have considered coup and impeachment as only possibilities other than capitulation to Nixon, which would be a partial coup.

Where we disagree is on interpretation. It does appear that Nixon is daring impeachment, inviting it, welcoming it. But I do not take this at face value. I believe and I have believed and I long ago wrote that his is the stalling game, with this confrontation in the fore because he knew everyone feared it. He is daring, as you say, but not in the hope he will be taken up as much as in stalling for time, having the initiative and the adrenalin and I believe delaying it.

Assume the House does, seriously, go for it. The process in the House will take a long time. Thereafter, the process in the Senate - and remember, his long-time personal fink, Burger, will run it there - it will take longer and stall the Congress entirely. One possibility is that he does not expect to stay in office at the end of the term. The

very simple problem then is to stay in office, no more. Here two things: his doing what you note, inviting the beginning of the impeachment process, actually delays it by scaring "them," meaning all of them. This, his honchos and other factors can delay it long enough so that it can mean nothing because if it ever does come to ~~the~~ a head, it will be so close to the end of his term it can be no more than a gesture. Meanwhile, his tending to the business of the nation is going to create much more turmoil than it has already, such is the care he gives it and the competence with which he can.

Another thought that terrifies Congress is going through it all and failing by a vote or two. I have tested a few of these, always hoping something could come of it but never really expecting. Of the recent ones I've have time to hear from Waldie and Conyers. "o word. Several in the Senate. The palace guards around the Abzugs and Dellums are such that I won't every try again. These bright young are brighter and holier than the pope, and unless it is something in which they, personally, have great interest, know the member is turned on over, or in general is something not requiring much thought, they will not even talk to one they don't know. Their arrogance differs from Waldeman's in nature, not fact. So, with the Congress, the only chance is his backing them so far into the corner that he leaves them no alternative or some coming Sensation, one they may not want to ignore or cannot. Except for something like this I really don't see impeachment as probable. In all of it, of course, he will be attacking them and they will be merely defending, and that ineffectually.

A minor rephrasing: knowing the public is short-minded and not particularly interested in political things, knowing full well that others have been proclaiming the energy crisis, he pretends he discovered and tried to do something about it. Here is is psychological as well as political with him.

(I must have Anderson column on take-over, but my memory now is such I don't recall four days back!)

My view is that while GL may have made his own estimates earlier, he took his cue from the Ervin committee. It was possible before Ehrlichman testified but from the opening day of his appearance there should never have been any doubt in Nixon's mind. "e knew what he could do, what he had to ~~do~~ do and what he could expect in opposition: nothing. Witness, among other things, the marked change in Post coverage and non-reporting.

(Sussman thinks the Jaworski and Ford stories will appear yet, as of today.)

Talk of resignation as a copout, we agree. I would go farther, however, and say that for those who do consider it seriously it is a measure of the lack of understanding among "liberals."

Impeachment now is our need, NOT Nixon's. He is better off delaying that as much as he can. Another reason is that it excuses all the many things he can be expected to louse up even worse than everything to date. Meanwhile, his managers can continue to select captive audiences, landings at air bases, all in the south, to buck him up a bit, which is more important than the claim he is getting a good reaction. That they invent or contrive so it really makes little difference. In bucking him up, they also have some influence on the GOPs who run next year and vote this year. Another way of putting this is that they now can and do influence impeachment sentiment among the doubtful votes.

WH sources: I think there are two kinds. One works for Nixon, pretending otherwise. The other, appearing to be his people, have turned. I don't know. This is what I believe.

I think I've have to start a separate impeachment file in what I've selected out for possible writing. I have a separate box on that. I'll begin it with this exchange, if we ever have to refer to it.

Best,

