

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, ~~than to~~ take rank with these poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."

ofc files

Price

FIRST DRAFT
August 4, 1974
Words:

OPTION B
AUGUST 5, 1974 SPEECH

[Prepared as Alternate Option for discussion w/President Nixon at Camp David 8/4/74. Discussion not held. See Statement 8/5 and Resignation 8/8/74.]

Good evening, my fellow Americans.

More than two years have passed since the Watergate break-in.

For some sixteen months -- for more than a year -- Watergate has dominated the headlines, distracted the Nation and divided our people.

Now, together, we confront the prospect of an even more intensive concentration on Watergate lasting until the end of the year -- if the House votes impeachment, and if the case goes to a trial in the Senate.

Each of us must weigh carefully the toll this has taken
its
already on our Nation, and the further toll in the months ahead.

This is a consideration that I am sure must weigh heavily on the minds of those members of the House considering their

votes. It is a consideration that weighs heavily on my own mind, as I consider what course best will serve the interests of the Nation, now and in the future.

Realistically, given the outcome of the Judiciary Committee proceedings and the present temper of the House, we must assume that the outcome of the House debate would be impeachment on one or more of the three articles voted by the Committee. This would automatically lead to a trial in the Senate -- a trial which would probably last until the end of the year, and the outcome of which could not be predicted.

Inevitably, such a trial would consume an inordinate share of my own time and attention, as well as that of the Senate and the Nation -- at a time when neither the Nation nor the world can afford such distraction.

Even if the trial were to end in acquittal, the result would be a weakened and damaged Presidency for the remainder of my term in office. There would be a lingering bitterness and division in the country. The Government would go on, but with severely reduced effectiveness -- at a critical time for America and for the world.

Throughout my Presidency -- indeed, throughout my political life -- I have always tried to do what I believed was in the best interests of the country. In these circumstances, I believe the country would best be served by my resigning this office.

Therefore, I shall resign the Presidency tomorrow, effective at _____ a.m. Vice President Ford will be inaugurated as President at that hour; at a ceremony in _____.

One of the great strengths of our Constitutional system is that it provides for an orderly succession, even in periods of extraordinary stress.

When I chose Mr. Ford as my nominee to fill the Vice-Presidential vacancy last _____, I did so because in the quarter century that I have known him and worked with him, I have found him to be a man of exceptional character, integrity, and ability -- one who understands America, who understands its needs, and who is fully capable of leading the country and of bringing distinction to this office.

As President, he will have my full support, and I ask that you give him yours.

I continue to believe firmly and completely that the mistakes that were made do not constitute sufficient grounds for the impeachment of a President. I have faith in the ultimate judgment of history on this Administration, and on my conduct of this office.

However, I do want to discuss with you, very frankly and very directly, a matter which I know would have affected the deliberations in both the House and the Senate, and which was also a factor in my own decision.

Last week, in my review of the tapes to be turned over to the Special Prosecutor, I discovered one that indicated my own knowledge of the Watergate cover-up was greater than I have previously indicated, and that it came sooner -- in fact, that I did learn shortly after the break-in that it was a potential source of severe embarrassment to the Administration and to my campaign committee, and that

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I did, at that time, approve actions which I hoped would have the effect of covering up the connection.

Rather than withhold that tape, I have turned it over to Judge Sirica. I have also made it available tonight to the House Judiciary Committee, so that its records will be complete.

In the light of this, I owe to you, the American people, an explanation of why until now I have continued to maintain that I had no knowledge of the cover-up until I was told about it by John Dean on March 21, 1973.

With hindsight, it is very easy to say that I should have simply opened up everything at once to the prosecutors, and let the chips fall where they might. Certainly the events that have followed have demonstrated that this would have been the wiser as well as the proper course.

At the time, however -- whether rightly or wrongly -- I was deeply concerned, in human terms, about the possible impact on valued friends and associates, as well as on others who had done wrong in a cause they believed to be right. Because some of the same people were involved, I was concerned that an unlimited investigation might compromise the genuinely sensitive national security matters that the so-called "plumbers" had been dealing with. In the midst of a political campaign, I knew that the break-in had the potential for massive exploitation as a political issue -- and that if a sufficient connection could be established, it conceivably could even be decisive in terms of the outcome, and therefore in terms of all that was at stake both here and abroad, including the foundation I was trying to build for a structure of peace that could last into the next century.

I thought the break-in itself was stupid, as well as wrong.

But once it had taken place, I knew that I had inherited the consequences -- and that with the Presidency at issue, those potential consequences reached out also to the Nation and to the world.

In retrospect, it would have been better to have explained this fully and frankly when Watergate and the cover-up again became a national issue early last year -- at a time when the cover-up had reached dimensions that I still did not fully comprehend. Instead, I felt trapped by events and chose a different way of attempting to defend what I believed to be the interests of the Presidency, and to preserve my capacity to function in what I believed to be the interests of the Nation.

I say this not in defense, but in explanation.

To those who have stood steadfastly with me through these months, including Vice President Ford, including members of my Cabinet, including those members of the House Judiciary Committee who argued and voted against impeachment, and including the many others who organized or spoke out in my behalf, I would say a particular word. Whether you would have done so if you had known the full story, I cannot know -- perhaps you cannot know. I deeply regret any embarrassment you may feel now, on learning that what you believed to be entirely true was only partially true. In my own conscience, I know that each judgment I made, including those judgments to withhold part of the truth, was made because

I believed at the time that it was in the national interest -- that in a situation in which there were no good answers, it was the least bad answer, not simply from my own standpoint but from the standpoint of the Nation whose stability I was trying to preserve.

In the course of the recent House Judiciary Committee hearings, my associates and I were accused of much wrongdoing. I accept full responsibility for whatever mistakes were made. I would only emphasize that in my own case, and I believe also on the part of those members of my Administration who were involved, we were attempting to serve the best interests of the country. There was no personal gain involved. The mistakes were mistakes of judgment.

We have heard much about what was called the abuse of power -- and in particular about the measures I took in 1969, 1970, 1971, to deal with what I considered serious threats to the Nation's security and well-being. From the relative calm of today's conditions, it is easy to look back, and to condemn the remedy without regard for the ill that it was meant to cure.

It is easy to forget the burning cities, the ravaged campuses, the college deans barricaded in their offices, the orgy of riots and mass, violent demonstrations that were designed to and did strike terror across the Nation. These were not democracy in action.

These were brutal and dangerous assaults against the democratic system.

It is easy to forget that the hemorrhaging leaks of the most sensitive defense and diplomatic secrets came at a time when those leaks seriously jeopardized our efforts to negotiate an end to the war in Vietnam, to negotiate a limitation on nuclear arms, and to negotiate a new relationship with the People's Republic of China. These leaks were hailed in the name of peace; those responsible were treated as heroes in the cause of peace. But in fact they threatened to destroy our efforts to achieve peace.

When I assumed this office, I had one overriding aim. That was to build a structure of peace in the world that would last beyond this Administration, and into the next century -- so that instead of three wars in a generation, the young Americans of today could look forward to the prospect of no wars in their lifetime.

As I leave this office, the one thing of which I am most proud is the progress we have made toward that goal. Not only by ending the war in Vietnam, but even more importantly by helping build a new pattern of relationships among the world's powers, one that will contribute to stability rather than instability and therefore to peace rather than war.

One reason I am leaving is to ensure that the bitterness and uncertainty of an impeachment trial will not jeopardize that structure. I would have preferred to continue building it, but I would rather leave than endanger it.

This is not a farewell. Although resigning the Presidency, I shall do all that I can to help my successor, and to advance the causes of peace abroad and progress at home that I did my best

to serve while I held that office. I shall do all that I can to help bind up whatever wounds may remain from the divisions and difficulties the Nation has gone through in these past two years.

In turning over this office to Vice President Ford, I do so with a profound sense of the weight of responsibility that will fall tomorrow morning on his shoulders -- and therefore of the understanding, the cooperation, the patience, he will need from all of us.

This is not a time for grudges; not a time for recrimination; but rather a time for dedication -- to America's future, to its institutions, to its traditions -- and to those shared values that are at the heart of its continuity.

Whoever occupies this office must be President of all the people -- and whoever occupies this office must have the help and

cooperation of all the people. We should, and must, have vigorous debates over the genuine policy differences that will always exist among a wide variety of persons with a wide variety of perspectives. But it also is important that we conduct those debates with civility, and with respect for our differences. We must do better in the future than we have done in the recent past -- when of the last three presidents, one, President Kennedy, was assassinated, and the next two -- one Democrat, one Republican -- in effect were driven from office.

There must be a measure of tolerance, a margin for imperfection, an acceptance of the fact that mistakes will occur -- and a recognition that the work of Government must go on. We must learn

to live better with our political differences, and to recognize that the institutions of Government are human institutions -- with all the faults and frailties that are part of the human condition. Only if we do so can we restore the stability, the continuity, that are essential if America is to begin its third century with the strength and resilience that the decades ahead will require.

In saying this, I am not offering excuses for wrongs that have taken place. I am not attempting to minimize those wrongs. But I am urging, for the future, that our judgments be leavened with a sense of proportion, and that future Presidents be judged while in office more nearly by the standards that history has a way of bringing after they have left office.

The wounds of Watergate must be healed, and they must be healed soon. As long as the power of the Presidency remains at stake, at long as the question of who will be President remains unsettled, that process will not begin. By this act, I trust that it will begin.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President during these past five and a half years. They have been a momentous time in the history of our Nation and the world. They have been a time of achievement of which I believe we can all be proud -- achievements that represent the shared efforts of the Administration, of the Congress and of the people.

To those who have fought beside me in these past difficult months, those who have given their support, their encouragement

and their aid, I offer my thanks, and also this thought: You may be tempted to feel that because the effort ended this way, it was not worth making. That would be a mistake. It is never wrong to do what we believe is right.

There is a time to fight, and a time to leave.

At each step of the way, I have tried to serve what I believed to be the best interests of the country. When I believed that those interests would best be served by fighting to retain office, I fought to retain it. Now I believe they would best be served by my leaving office -- and so I shall leave.

Thank you, and good evening.

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Price

8/3/74

Aug 5 '74
speech -

Good evening.

Since the decision by the Supreme Court 12 days ago, ordering me to turn over to the District Court the 64 ~~recorded~~ taped conversations subpoenaed by the Special Prosecutor, I have been in the process of reviewing personally a large number of subpoenaed Presidential conversations, ~~in addition~~ and my counsel have also been conducting their own review.

During this process, a great deal of my time and effort ~~have~~ has been focused on it.

Questions have arisen about my intentions -- about whether there is a strategy, and about what I am going to do.

I have requested this television and radio time in order to bring you up to date on my current plans.

I am very conscious of the erosion that has taken place in the political base that I would need to sustain my position in the House of Representatives. It does appear now that impeachment ~~is~~ will be voted by the House, and that the issue will proceed to a trial in the Senate.

As a practical matter,
I accept the virtual certainty of that development, and ~~of~~

~~therefore~~ I am therefore proceeding on the assumption ~~that~~ that the
issue will ~~be~~ be finally resolved in the Senate.

In reviewing the 64 tapes covered by the Special Prosecutors
subpoena, I have found, with one exception, that they ~~add nothing~~
support what I said on April 29 when ~~a~~ I announced my decision to
make the original transcripts public: ~~x~~ that the evidence already
turned over to the House Judiciary Committee tells the full story
of Watergate, in so far as the President's personal knowledge or
involvement is concerned. With this one exception, they add nothing
~~as~~ significant or substantial. ~~xxxxxx~~

The one exception is a conversation ~~that~~ I held with H.R.

Because this may represent a significant
Haldeman on June 23, 1972. In order to ~~complete the record before~~
addition to the Watergate story, I have instructed my attorney to
~~the House, I have~~ have ordered that this tape be furnished to
make it available immediately to the House in order to complete
~~the Judiciary Committee tonight.~~ All 64, of course, are also being

~~xxxxxx~~ turned over to Judge Sirica, in accordance with the order of

the Supreme Court. *As these* become public, which they ~~will~~ undoubtedly
will in the course of the various trials for which they were subpoenaed,
I am confident that the truth of ~~what I have said about them~~ *this* will be
evident.

The tape that I am furnishing the House committee is of a conversation with Mr. Haldeman concerning the C.I.A. and the F.B.I.

In my statement about Watergate on May 22, 1973, and in subsequent comments, I ~~said that in this conversation~~ discussed this conversation -- ~~six~~ on June 23, six days after the break-in -- in terms that I ~~kn~~ now find to be erroneous, or at least incomplete. In these statements, I said that I was concerned that because several former C.I.A. personnel were involved in the break-in, the investigation might uncover unrelated covert activities of the C.I.A.; and also that ~~because of Mr. Hunt's involvement, it might uncover some of the sensitive~~ because Mr. Hunt was not ~~only~~ only a former ~~of~~ C.I.A. operative but ~~also~~ had also been a member of the so-called "plumbers," ~~that~~ the investigation might reveal details of what I considered highly sensitive national security matters the plumbers had worked on. Therefore, I said, I gave instructions that the F.B.I. should be ~~also~~ alerted to coordinate ~~a~~ with the C.I.A., and to ensure that the investigation ^{not expose} ~~stayed out of~~ sensitive national security ^{matters} areas.

~~In my view~~

That ~~May 22~~ statement of May 22, 1973 was based on my best
documentary materials and to
recollection at the time, in addition to/sworn testimony by the
various people involved.

In reviewing the tape, it is now clear that Mr. Haldeman and
I did discuss the political aspects of the situation, and that we
were fully aware of the advantages this course of action would have
~~was~~ with respect to limiting possible public exposure of involvement
by persons connected with the re-election committee.

I deeply regret that because my previous statements were made
without benefit of having reviewed the tape, they were inaccurate.

I did begin a review of the 64 subpoenaed tapes, including this
one, in May of this year, but then postponed it pending decision by
the Supreme Court. I now recognize this ~~postponement~~ ^{completing the} as having been

a grievous mistake, because ~~it~~ as a result my counsel, my staff, and

~~the members of the~~ those who advocated my position within the Judiciary
Committee did so on the basis of facts that were incomplete.

To put that June 23 conversation in perspective, however, I do

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Throughout my Presidency -- indeed, throughout my political life -- I have always tried to do what I believed was in the best interests of the country. In these circumstances, I believe the country would best be served by my resigning this office.

Therefore, I shall resign the Presidency tomorrow, effective at _____ a.m. Vice President Ford will be inaugurated as President at that hour, at a ceremony in _____.

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I did, at that time, approve actions which I hoped would have the effect of covering up the connection.

Rather than withhold that tape, I have turned it over to Judge Sirica. I have also made it available tonight to the House Judiciary Committee, so that its records will be complete.

In the light of this, I owe to you, the American people, an explanation of why until now I have continued to maintain that I had no knowledge of the cover-up until I was told about it by John Dean on March 21, 1973.

With hindsight, it is very easy to say that I should have simply opened up everything at once to the prosecutors, and let the chips fall where they might. Certainly the events that have followed have demonstrated that this would have been the wiser as well as the proper course.

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But once it had taken place, I knew that I had inherited the consequences -- and that with the Presidency at issue, those potential consequences reached out also to the Nation and to the world.

In retrospect, it would have been better to have explained this fully and frankly when Watergate and the cover-up again became a national issue early last year -- at a time when the cover-up had reached dimensions that I still did not fully comprehend. Instead, I felt trapped by events and chose a different way of attempting to defend what I believed to be the interests of the Presidency, and to preserve my capacity to function in what I believed to be the interests of the Nation.

I say this not in defense, but in explanation.

To those who have stood steadfastly with me through these months, including Vice President Ford, including members of my Cabinet, including those members of the House Judiciary Committee who argued and voted against impeachment, and including the many others who organized or spoke out in my behalf, I would say a particular word. Whether you would have done so if you had known the full story, I cannot know -- perhaps you cannot know. I deeply regret any embarrassment you may feel now, on learning that what you believed to be entirely true was only partially true. In my own conscience, I know that each judgment I made, including those judgments to withhold part of the truth, was made because

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to live better with our political differences, and to recognize that the institutions of Government are human institutions -- with all the faults and frailties that are part of the human condition. Only if we do so can we restore the stability, the continuity, that are essential if America is to begin its third century with the strength and resilience that the decades ahead will require.

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I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President during these past five and a half years. They have been a momentous time in the history of our Nation and the world. They have been a time of achievement of which I believe we can all be proud -- achievements that represent the shared efforts of the Administration, of the Congress and of the people.

To those who have fought beside me in these past difficult months, those who have given their support, their encouragement

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and their aid, I offer my thanks, and also this thought: You may be tempted to feel that because the effort ended this way, it was not worth making. That would be a mistake. It is never wrong to do what we believe is right.

There is a time to fight, and a time to leave.

At each step of the way, I have tried to serve what I believed to be the best interests of the country. When I believed that those interests would best be served by fighting to retain office, I fought to retain it. Now I believe they would best be served by my leaving office -- and so I shall leave.

Thank you, and good evening.

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AUGUST ~~28~~ 5 SPEECH

Good evening.

~~deliberations~~
With the ~~action~~ of the House Judiciary Committee completed and its ~~impeachment~~ recommendation awaiting action by the full House of Representatives, ~~anumber of~~ questions have been raised about my own plans for dealing with ~~the impeachment~~ the impeachment issue.

I have requested this time in order to tell you how I intend to proceed.

Debate on the committee's impeachment recommendations is scheduled to begin on the House floor ~~in~~ two weeks from today -- on August 19.

In the wake of the Judiciary Committee's action,
There has been a very substantial ~~erosion~~ erosion of the political base that I would need in order to sustain my position in the House of Representatives. Therefore, it ~~does not~~ ^{it} at this time ^{s/} appear ^{s/} almost a foregone ~~conclusion~~ conclusion that one or more articles of impeachment will be voted by the House, and that the matter will ~~therefore~~ go to a trial in the Senate.

As a practical matter, I accept the virtual certainty of this development. In a phrase very familiar to members of the House, the other side has the votes. Therefore, I shall proceed on the assumption that the issue will finally be resolved in the Senate.

It is not my purpose tonight to argue my case. There will be time for that later. Rather, I want to explain how I intend to proceed, why I intend to proceed.

I also want to tell you about one new piece of evidence I have discovered, which I recognize will not be helpful to my case -- but which I have instructed my attorneys to make available immediately to the Judiciary Committee, so that it can be reflected in their report and so that the record will be complete both for the House and for the Senate.

In a formal written statement on May 22 of last year, I said that shortly after the Watergate break-in I became concerned about the possibility that the ~~Reagan~~ investigation might ~~lead to the exposure of~~ ~~unrelated covert activities of the C.I.A., or~~ ~~of~~ sensitive national security matters that the so-called "plumbers" unit~~ed~~ at the White House ~~had~~ had been working on -- because of the C.I.A. and plumbers connections of some of those involved. I said that I therefore gave instructions that the ~~FBI~~ F.B.I. should be alerted to coordinate with the C.I.A., and to ensure that the investigation not expose these sensitive national security matters.

That statement was based on my best recollection at the time, plus documentary materials and the ~~testimony~~ sworn testimony of those involved.

In the past several days, I have been engaged in an intensive ~~personal~~ review of the 64 taped conversations covered by the Special Prosecutor's subpoena and the Supreme Court's recent order that they be turned over to Judge Sirica. With one exception, I ~~have~~ found that ~~they~~ they bear out what I said on April 29 when I announced my de-

cision to make public the original transcripts: that the evidence I have turned over to the Judiciary ~~Committee~~ Committee tells the full story of Watergate, in so ~~far~~ far as the President's knowledge or involvement is concerned. These 64 additional tapes are being turned over to Judge Sirica, in accordance with the ~~U~~ Supreme Court's ruling. As they become public, which they undoubtedly will, the truth of this will be evident.

The one exception is a conversation I held with H.R. Haldeman on June 23, 1972, which concerns my instructions ~~with~~ with regard to ~~the~~ coordination between the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. In reviewing the tape, it is ^{now} clear to me that Mr. Haldeman and I did discuss the political aspects of the situation, and that we were fully aware of the advantages this course of action would have with respect to limiting possible public exposure of involvement by persons connected with the re-election committee.

~~This should have been included with the original transcript~~

Let me take a moment to explain why I did not make this public sooner, although I should have. In ~~a~~ May of this year I began a review of ~~the~~ the 64 tapes subpoenaed by the Special Prosecutor, but ~~they~~ then postponed completing it pending the decision ~~by the~~ ~~Supreme Court~~ ~~Supreme Court~~ that was finally handed down 12 days ago by the Supreme Court. In the course of this partial review I listened to this tape, but did not focus on it thoroughly. I did not at the time consider it inconsistent with my past statements, nor did I have transcripts made or advise my staff or counsel about any possible concern with it.

I now recognize this as having been a serious mistake, because as a result of it my counsel, my staff, and others, including members of the Judiciary Committee, ~~and others~~ who defended my position did so on the basis of facts that were incomplete.

While recognizing full well that some will interpret this conversation ~~transcript~~ in an extremely negative way, ~~however~~, I would emphasize what actually happened as a result of it. Acting Director Gray of

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believe it is important to ~~i~~ emphasize ~~an~~ what actually ~~happ~~ happened
as a result of it. Acting Director ~~of~~ Gray of the F.B.I. did coordinate
with Director Helms and Deputy Director Walters of the C.I.A. The
C.I.A. did check to see whether any of its covert activities would
be compromised by a full F.B.I. investigation of Watergate. Deputy
Director Walters reported to Mr. Gray ^{on} ~~that~~ they would not be compromised.
Mr. Gray in turn reported this to ~~maximum~~ me on July 6, and, as the
record shows, I then told him to press ahead vigorously with his
investigation -- which he did.

7
Let me turn now to the future.

~~The pressures of time~~

There has been a great deal of speculation that I would resign, rather than face trial by the Senate.

~~Some cite the~~

Some cite the ~~the~~ erosion of my ~~political~~ political base, and say

Some suggest that if I persevere, ~~in seeing the Constitutional process through to its conclusion~~, I am not only ignoring what they

consider the inevitable outcome, but ~~also~~ doing so at considerable personal risk. They point to the fact that a President who resigns

keeps all the pensions, allowances and other perquisites of an

ex-President, whereas one ~~convicted by the Senate~~ removed by the

Senate loses everything, -- and that he leaves in disgrace.

Some cite the costs ~~of~~ to the nation of more months of distraction and uncertainty.

The Constitutional process

Some say I should not see ~~it~~ through, because even if vindicated by the Senate I would be so weakened politically that I could not govern effectively for ~~the~~ the remainder of my term.

That this either divides or
loses my chances in
The Senate.

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Let me turn now to the future.

There are those who ~~do~~ believe that I will resign, or that I should resign, because of the ~~unprecedented~~ erosion of my ~~political~~ political base, or because of the additional ~~er~~io erosion they foresee as a result of this new information.

They suggest that if I persevere in seeing the Constitutional process through to its conclusion, I am not only ignoring the inevitable outcome but also doing so at considerable personal

Thought long and hard about all of these questions.
~~risk.~~ I have ~~explored this thoroughly with~~ weighed carefully *I have*

what I consider to be the competing national interests involved.

I have explored the question thoroughly with my family.

share in my conviction
They ~~and I are unanimous in the conviction~~ that the Constitutional process must not be aborted or short-circuited -- that having begun, it must be carried through to its conclusion, that is, ~~to~~ through a fair trial ~~in~~ in the Senate and to a decision by that body.

On the question of whether a duly elected President should be removed from office, the Constitution~~a~~ places the final judgment in

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the Senate of the United States. It places the ~~responsibility~~ responsibility on
each Senator to ~~weigh~~ consider the evidence, to decide guilt or innocence,
and to ~~consider whether~~ weigh the consequences to the nation of
breaching the fixed-term tradition.

If I were to resign, it would spare the country ~~the months~~
~~yet~~ additional months consumed with the ordeal of a Presidential
impeachment and trial.

But it would leave unresolved the questions that have
already cost the country so much in anguish, division and uncertainty.

More important, it would leave a permanent crack in our ~~constitutional~~
constitutional structure: it would establish the principle that ^{under pressure,} a
President could be ^{removed} ~~driven~~ from office ~~by~~ ^{under pressure} means short of those provided
by the Constitution. By establishing that principle, it would
invite such pressures on every future President who might, for whatever reason, feel into

When the founding fathers provided for the impeachment process,
they deliberately ~~provided~~ and wisely established a set of procedures
and criteria ^(that were deliberately) designed to make removal of a President possible, but
difficult. This is less for the purpose of protecting the President
personally than it is to protect the stability and continuity of the

a period of unpopularity

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would have resigned long ago.

political process -- to guard the nation from the ebb and flow of passions, and to ensure the most ~~at~~ painstaking consideration before taking an act of the gravest consequences.

Whatever the mistakes that have been made -- and they are many -- and whatever the ~~nature~~ ^{measure} of my own responsibility for those mistakes,

I firmly believe that I have not committed any act of commission or

omission that justifies removing a duly elected President from office.

If I did believe that I had committed such an act, I
~~Believing that I had committed such an act, I~~ *Quite obviously, others disagree -- including*

a majority of the House Judiciary Committee, and by all indications

a majority of the House itself. But believing as I do that I have

not committed such an act, I could not in conscience desert this

office without seeing the Constitutional process through to its

conclusion.

For me to see this through ~~in~~ will have costs for the country in the short run. The months ahead will not be easy for any of us.

But in the long run -- whatever the outcome -- the result will be

a more stable form of government. Far more damaging than the ordeal

of a Senate trial, far more damaging than even the ~~conviction~~ conviction and

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removal of a President, would be the descent toward chaos if Presidents could be removed short of impeachment and trial.

Throughout the Western world, governmental instability has reached almost epidemic proportions as one government after another has been ~~is~~ forced out of office. Here in the United States, ~~even~~ within the last dozen years one President ~~was~~ was assassinated; the next was in ~~effect~~ effect driven from office when he ~~decided not to~~ did not even seek re-election; and now the third stands on the verge of impeachment by the House of Representatives, ~~and~~ confronted with calls for his resignation in order to make the process of removal easier.

This country bears enormous responsibilities to itself and to the world. If ~~there~~ we are to meet those responsibilities ~~in~~ ~~the decades ahead~~, in this and future Presidencies, we must not let this office be destroyed -- or let it fall such easy ~~prey~~ ^{would} prey to those who ¹ exult in the breaking of the President that the game becomes a national habit.

Therefore, I shall see the Constitutional process through -- whatever its outcome.

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~~Because~~

Because I believe in my case, I expect to be vindicated --

whether ~~by~~ ^{by} this Senate, or ^{by} those a generation from now who write
the history of these times.

I shall appear before the Senate, and answer under oath/
any and all questions that may be put to me. *Then* .

I expect to be vindicated not only for my conduct as President,
but also for my determination ~~not~~ that there will be no cheapening
of the Constitutional process, and no weakening of this office ~~by~~
~~allowing the same to be dismantled~~ for future Presidents by dismantling
is constitutional protections. Those ~~pro~~ protections were erected
not for the sake of any particular incumbent, but for the sake of
the nation -- and for the nation's sake, I intend to keep them in place.

Thank you, and good evening.

Price

FIRST DRAFT
August 3, 1974

*See Option B
8/4/74*

AUGUST 5, 1974 SPEECH

Good evening.

With the deliberations of the House Judiciary Committee completed and its recommendation awaiting action by the full House of Representatives, questions have been raised about my own plans for dealing with the impeachment issue.

I have requested this time in order to tell you how I intend to proceed.

Debate on the Committee's impeachment recommendations is scheduled to begin on the House floor two weeks from today -- on August 19.

In the wake of the Judiciary Committee's action, there has been a very substantial erosion of the political base that I would

need in order to sustain my position in the House of Representatives.

Therefore, at this time it appears almost a foregone conclusion that one or more articles of impeachment will be voted by the House, and that the matter will go to a trial in the Senate.

As a practical matter, I accept the virtual certainty of this development. In a phrase very familiar to members of the House, the other side has the votes. Therefore, I shall proceed on the assumption that the issue will finally be resolved in the Senate.

It is not my purpose tonight to argue my case. There will be time for that later. Rather, I want to explain how I intend to proceed.

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I also want to tell you about one new piece of evidence I have discovered, which I recognize will not be helpful to my case -- but which I have instructed my attorneys to make available immediately to the Judiciary Committee, so that it can be reflected in their report and so that the record will be complete both for the House and for the Senate.

In a formal written statement on May 22 of last year, I said that shortly after the Watergate break-in I became concerned about the possibility that the investigation might lead to the exposure either of unrelated covert activities of the CIA, or of sensitive national security matters that the so-called "plumbers" unit at the White House had been working on -- because of the CIA and plumbers connections of some of those

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involved. I said that I therefore gave instructions that the FBI should be alerted to coordinate with the CIA, and to ensure that the investigation not expose these sensitive national security matters.

That statement was based on my best recollection at the time, plus documentary materials and the sworn testimony of those involved.

In the past several days, I have been engaged in an intensive review of the 64 taped conversations covered by the Special Prosecutor's subpoena and the Supreme Court's recent order that they be turned over to Judge Sirica. With one exception, I have found that they bear out what I said on April 29 when I announced my

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decision to make public the original transcripts: that the evidence I have turned over to the Judiciary Committee tells the full story of Watergate, in so far as the President's knowledge or involvement is concerned. These 64 additional tapes are being turned over to Judge Sirica, in accordance with the Supreme Court's ruling. As they become public, which they undoubtedly will, the truth of this will be evident.

The one exception is a conversation I held with H. R. Haldeman on June 23, 1972, which concerns my instructions with regard to coordination between the FBI and the CIA. In reviewing the tape it is now clear to me that Mr. Haldeman and I did discuss the political aspects of the situation, and that we were fully aware of

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the advantages this course of action would have with respect to limiting possible public exposure of involvement by persons connected with the re-election committee.

Let me take a moment to explain why I did not make this public sooner, although I should have. In May of this year I began a review of the 64 tapes subpoenaed by the Special Prosecutor, but then postponed completing it pending the decision that was finally handed down 12 days ago by the Supreme Court. In the course of this partial review I listened to this tape, but did not focus on it thoroughly. I did not at the time consider it inconsistent with my past statements, nor did I have transcripts made or advise my staff or counsel about any possible concern with it.

See also p. 6 (Rev.) attached

I now recognize this as having been a serious mistake, because as a result of it my counsel, my staff, and others, including members of the Judiciary Committee, who defended my position did so on the basis of facts that were incomplete.

While recognizing full well that some will interpret this conversation in an extremely negative way, I would emphasize what actually happened as a result of it. Acting Director Gray of the FBI did coordinate with Director Helms and Deputy Director Walters of the CIA. The CIA did check to see whether any of its covert activities would be compromised by a full FBI investigation of Watergate. Deputy Director Walters reported to Mr. Gray on _____ that they would not be compromised. Mr. Gray in turn reported this to me on July 6, and, as the record shows, I then told him to press ahead vigorously with his investigation -- which he did.

Let me turn now to the future.

There has been a great deal of speculation that I would resign,
rather than face trial by the Senate.

Some cite the erosion of my political base, and say that this
either dims or dooms my chances in the Senate.

Some cite the costs to the Nation of more months of distraction and uncertainty.

Some say I should not see the Constitutional process through,
because even if vindicated by the Senate I would be so weakened
politically that I could not govern effectively for the remainder of
my term.

Some suggest that if I persevere, I am not only ignoring what they consider the inevitable outcome, but doing so at considerable personal risk. They point to the fact that a President who resigns keeps all the pensions, allowances and other perquisites of an ex-President, whereas one removed by the Senate loses everything -- and that he leaves in disgrace.

I have thought long and hard about all of these questions. I have weighed carefully what I consider to be the competing national interests involved. I have explored the questions thoroughly with my family.

They share in my belief that the Constitutional process must not be aborted or short-circuited -- that having begun, it

See also p. 9 (Rev.)
attach

must be carried through to its conclusion, that is, through a fair trial in the Senate and to a decision by that body.

On the question of whether a duly elected President should be removed from office, the Constitution places the final judgment in the Senate of the United States. It places the responsibility on each Senator to consider the evidence, to decide guilt or innocence, and to weigh the consequences to the Nation of breaching the fixed-term tradition.

If I were to resign, it would spare the country additional months consumed with the ordeal of a Presidential impeachment and trial.

But it would leave unresolved the questions that have already cost the country so much in anguish, division and uncertainty.

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More important, it would leave a permanent crack in our Constitutional structure: it would establish the principle that under pressure, a President could be removed from office by means short of those provided by the Constitution. By establishing that principle, it would invite such pressures on every future President who might, for whatever reason, fall into a period of unpopularity.

When the founding fathers provided for the impeachment process, they established a set of procedures and criteria that were deliberately designed to make removal of a President possible, but difficult. This is less for the purpose of protecting the President personally than it is to protect the stability and continuity of the political process -- to guard the Nation from the

ebb and flow of passions, and to ensure the most painstaking consideration before taking an act of the gravest consequences.

Whatever the mistakes that have been made -- and they are many -- and whatever the measure of my own responsibility for those mistakes, I firmly believe that I have not committed any act of commission or omission that justifies removing a duly elected President from office. If I did believe that I had committed such an act, I would have resigned long ago.

Quite obviously, others disagree -- including a majority of the House Judiciary Committee, and by all indications a majority of the House itself. But believing as I do that I have not committed such an act, I could not in conscience desert this office without seeing the Constitutional process through to its conclusion.

For me to see this through will have costs for the country in the short run. The months ahead will not be easy for any of us. But in the long run -- whatever the outcome -- the results will be a more stable form of government. Far more damaging than the ordeal of a Senate trial, far more damaging than even the conviction and removal of a President, would be the descent toward chaos if Presidents could be removed short of impeachment and trial.

Throughout the Western world, governmental instability has reached almost epidemic proportions as one government after another has been forced out of office. Here in the United States, within the last dozen years one President was assassinated; the next was in effect driven from office when he did not even seek reelection; and now the third stands on the verge of impeachment

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by the House of Representatives, confronted with calls for his resignation in order to make the process of removal easier.

This country bears enormous responsibilities to itself and to the world. If we are to meet those responsibilities in this and future Presidencies, we must not let this office be destroyed -- or let it fall such easy prey to those who would exult in the breaking of the President that the game becomes a national habit.

Therefore, I shall see the Constitutional process through -- whatever its outcome.

I shall appear before the Senate, and answer under oath before the Senate any and all questions put to me there.

Because I believe in my case, I expect to be vindicated --
whether by this Senate, or by those a generation from now who
write the history of these times.

I expect to be vindicated not only for my conduct as a
President, but also for any determination that there will be
no cheapening of the Constitutional process, and no weakening
of this office for future Presidents by dismantling its Constitu-
tional protections. Those protections were erected not for the
sake of any particular incumbent, but for the sake of the Nation
-- and for the Nation's sake, I intend to keep them in place.

Thank you, and good evening.

#

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-6-(Rev.)

the advantages this course of action would have with respect to limiting possible public exposure of involvement by persons connected with the re-election committee. Because this conversation took place just a few days after the break-in, I know it will be widely interpreted as evidence that I was involved from the outset in efforts at cover-up.

Let me take a moment to explain why I did not make this public sooner, although I should have. In May of this year I began a review of the 64 tapes subpoenaed by the Special Prosecutor, but then postponed completing it pending the decision that was finally handed down 12 days ago by the Supreme Court. In the course of that earlier partial review I listened to this tape, but did not focus on it thoroughly. I did not at the time consider it inconsistent with my past statements, nor did I have transcripts made or advise my staff or counsel about any possible concern with it.

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Some suggest that if I persevere, I am not only ignoring what they consider the inevitable outcome, but doing so at considerable personal risk.

Indeed, when I reviewed the June 23 tape, and realized the interpretations that will probably be placed on it, I seriously considered resigning.

I have thought long and hard about all of these questions. I have weighed carefully what I consider to be the competing national interests involved. I have explored the questions thoroughly with my family.

They share in my belief that the Constitutional process must not be aborted or short-circuited -- that having begun, it