

# Comments on President Nixon's resignation

Senator Hiram L. Fong Papers

Public Relations, Speeches, statements, and messages, Box PR29, Folder 52

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WASHINGTON, AUGUST 8, 1974 -- U. S. Senator Hiram L. Fong made the following comment today on the resignation of President Nixon:

President Nixon's farewell address was a very moving call for unity in America and a call to bind up our Nation's wounds. I grieve with him in his not being able to finish his goal for a long and lasting peace.

Despite the tragedy of the moment, the fact remains President Nixon performed brilliantly in the field of foreign affairs and in the cause of world peace.

Under his leadership, giant steps were taken toward mankind's dream -- a world without war.

The resignation of President Nixon in the interest of the Nation marks a sad ending to a long career in public service. It is especially sad to see a President leave office under these circumstances.

For me, the events leading to his resignation and his resignation have been particularly painful. He is a long-time friend of mine, and he loved Hawaii. In his yearly budgets, he tried to take care of Hawaii's needs. He appointed many of Hawaii's people to high national positions of responsibility.

My heartfelt prayers are with the Nixons and all their family.

As Gerald Ford assumes the Presidency, I humbly ask all Americans to give him their wholehearted support.

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I humbly ask all Americans to rally around President Gerald Ford who needs our wholehearted support as he takes up the awesome burdens of his office.

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I hope all Americans will now rally around President Ford as he undertakes the burdens of our Nation's Chief Executive.

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*Original  
Senators*

*script*

RECEIVED  
OFFICE OF SENATOR  
HIRAM L. FONG

AUG 12 1974

7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

August 9, 1974

Dear Hiram:

Unfortunately, the events of the last few days made it impossible for President Nixon personally to talk to all his loyal, good friends -- like you. He was concerned that some of his congressional supporters might not fully appreciate the limits of time and space which controlled his schedule. I assured him that those who stood with him in the great battles, who won and lost in good times and bad, would certainly understand his inability to meet them all in the final hours of his Presidency. If it had been possible, Richard Nixon would have wanted to clasp your hand, look you straight in the eye, and bid farewell.

As a final token of the Nixon years in the White House, I enclose a copy of the President's national address.

Best wishes for your future,

Sincerely,



William E. Timmons  
Assistant to the President

The Honorable Hiram L. Fong  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Enclosure

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AUGUST 8, 1974

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

From the Office of  
SENATOR HUGH SCOTT  
REPUBLICAN LEADER

THE OVAL OFFICE

9:01 P.M. EDT

RECEIVED  
AUG 9 1974  
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Good evening.

This is the 37th time I have spoken to you from this office, where so many decisions have been made that shaped the history of this Nation. Each time I have done so to discuss with you some matter that I believe affected the national interest.

In all the decisions I have made in my public life, I have always tried to do what was best for the Nation. Throughout the long and difficult period of Watergate, I have felt it was my duty to persevere, to make every possible effort to complete the term of office to which you elected me.

In the past few days, however, it has become evident to me that I no longer have a strong enough political base in the Congress to justify continuing that effort. As long as there was a base, I felt strongly that it was necessary to see the constitutional process through to its conclusion, that to do otherwise would be unfaithful to the spirit of that deliberately difficult process, and a dangerously destabilizing precedent for the future.

But with the disappearance of that base, I now believe that the constitutional purpose has been served, and there is no longer a need for the process to be prolonged.

I would have preferred to carry through to the finish whatever the personal agony it would have involved, and my family unanimously urged me to do so. But the interest of the Nation must always come before any personal considerations.

From the discussions I have had with Congressional and other leaders, I have concluded that because of the Watergate matter I might not have the support of the Congress that I would consider necessary to back the very difficult decisions and carry out the duties of this office in the way the interests of the Nation would require.

MORE

I have never been a quitter. To leave office before my term is completed is abhorrent to every instinct in my body. But as President, I must put the interest of America first. America needs a full-time President and a full-time Congress, particularly at this time with the problems we face at home and abroad.

To continue to fight through the months ahead for my personal vindication would almost totally absorb the time and attention of both the President and the Congress in a period when our entire focus should be on the great issues of peace abroad and prosperity without inflation at home.

Therefore, I shall resign the Presidency effective at noon tomorrow. Vice President Ford will be sworn in as President at that hour in this office.

As I recall the high hopes for America with which we began this second term, I feel a great sadness that I will not be here in this office working on your behalf to achieve those hopes in the next 2-1/2 years. But in turning over direction of the Government to Vice President Ford, I know, as I told the Nation when I nominated him for that office ten months ago, that the leadership of America will be in good hands.

In passing this office to the Vice President, I also do so with the profound sense of the weight of responsibility that will fall on his shoulders tomorrow and, therefore, of the understanding, the patience, the cooperation he will need from all Americans.

As he assumes that responsibility, he will deserve the help and the support of all of us. As we look to the future, the first essential is to begin healing the wounds of this Nation; to put the bitterness and the divisions of the recent past behind us and to rediscover those shared ideals that lie at the heart of our strength and unity as a great and as a free people.

By taking this action, I hope that I will have hastened the start of that process of healing which is so desperately needed in America.

I regret deeply any injuries that may have been done in the course of the events that led to this decision. I would say only that if some of my judgments were wrong, and some were wrong, they were made in what I believed at the time to be the best interest of the Nation.

To those who have stood with me during these past difficult months, to my family, my friends, to many others who joined in supporting my cause because they believed it was right, I will be eternally grateful for your support.

MORE

And to those who have not felt able to give me your support, let me say I leave with no bitterness toward those who have opposed me, because all of us, in the final analysis, have been concerned with the good of the country however our judgments might differ.

So, let us all now join together in affirming that common commitment and in helping our new President succeed for the benefit of all Americans.

I shall leave this office with regret at not completing my term, but with gratitude for the privilege of serving as your President for the past 5-1/2 years. These years have been a momentous time in the history of our Nation and the world. They have been a time of achievement in which we can all be proud, achievements that represent the shared efforts of the Administration, the Congress and the people.

But the challenges ahead are equally great and they, too, will require the support and the efforts of the Congress and the people working in cooperation with the new Administration.

We have ended America's longest war, but in the work of securing a lasting peace in the world, the goals ahead are even more far-reaching and more difficult. We must complete a structure of peace so that it will be said of this generation, our generation, of Americans, by the people of all nations, not only that we ended one war, but that we prevented future wars.

MORE

We have unlocked the doors that for a quarter of a century stood between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

We must now ensure that the one quarter of the world's people who live in the People's Republic of China will be and remain not our enemies but our friends.

In the Middle East, 100 million people in the Arab countries, many of whom have considered us their enemy for nearly 20 years, now look on us as their friends. We must continue to build on that friendship so that peace can settle at last over the Middle East and so that the cradle of civilization will not become its grave.

Together with the Soviet Union we have made the crucial breakthroughs that have begun the process of limiting nuclear arms. But we must set as our goal not just limiting, but reducing and finally destroying these terrible weapons so that they cannot destroy civilization and so that the threat of nuclear war will no longer hang over the world and the people.

We have opened the new relation with the Soviet Union. We must continue to develop and expand that new relationship so that the two strongest nations of the world will live together in cooperation rather than confrontation.

Around the world, in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, in the Middle East, there are millions of people who live in terrible poverty, even starvation. We must keep as our goal turning away from production for war and expanding production for peace so that people everywhere on this earth can at least look forward in their children's time, if not in our own time, to having the necessities for a decent life.

Here in America, we are fortunate that most of our people have not only the blessings of liberty, but also the means to live full and good and, by the world's standards, even abundant lives. We must press on, however, to a goal of not only more and better jobs, but of full opportunity for every American, and of what we are striving so hard right now to achieve, prosperity without inflation.

For more than a quarter of a century in public life I have shared in the turbulent history of this era. I have fought for what I believed in. I have tried to the best of my ability to discharge those duties and meet those responsibilities that were entrusted to me.

MORE

Sometimes I have succeeded and sometimes I have failed, but always I have taken heart from what Theodore Roosevelt once said about the man in the arena, "whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again because there is not effort without error and shortcoming, but who does actually strive to do the deeds, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumphs of high achievements and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."

I pledge to you tonight that as long as I have a breath of life in my body, I shall continue in that spirit. I shall continue to work for the great causes to which I have been dedicated throughout my years as a Congressman, a Senator, a Vice President and President; the cause of peace not just for America but among all nations, prosperity, justice and opportunity for all of our people.

There is one cause above all to which I have been devoted and to which I shall always be devoted for as long as I live.

When I first took the oath of office as President five and one-half years ago, I made this sacred commitment: "To consecrate my office, my energies and all the wisdom I can summon to the cause of peace among nations."

I have done my very best in all the days since to be true to that pledge. As a result of these efforts, I am confident that the world is a safer place today, not only for the people of America, but for the people of all nations, and that all of our children have a better chance than before of living in peace rather than dying in war.

This, more than anything, is what I hoped to achieve when I sought the Presidency. This, more than anything, is what I hope will be my legacy to you, to our country, as I leave the Presidency.

To have served in this office is to have felt a very personal sense of kinship with each and every American. In leaving it, I do so with this prayer: May God's grace be with you in all the days ahead.

END (AT 9:16 P.M. EDT)

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# 4 lawmakers see resignation as best action

By JERRY BURRIS

Advertiser Politics Writer

The departure of Richard Nixon brings a sense of relief to Capitol Hill, Hawaii's congressional delegation said yesterday.

The three Democrats and one Republican who represent the Islands in Washington unanimously agreed that Nixon's resignation spared Congress and the American people the agony of almost certain impeachment and probable conviction.

And all concurred that, with Nixon out of office, no further purpose would be served by continuing the process of impeachment and Senate trial.

In many ways, Nixon's resignation fell most heavily on Republican Sen. Hiram Fong.

"THE EVENTS LEADING to his resignation have been particularly painful to me because he is a long-time friend of mine and he loved Hawaii," Fong said.

Fong saw Nixon's decision to resign primarily in political terms.

"When the President admitted he withheld information he should have given, immediately there was a great erosion of support in Congress — especially by those running for office," he said.

Fong said the clamor to have Nixon resign before the inevitable Senate trial was led by those senators up for reelection who knew they would lose popular votes no matter how they voted in an impeachment trial.

In a sense, Fong thinks many senators helped push Nixon out of office because they were worried about their own reelection.

NIXON'S RESIGNATION has another political side effect, Fong said. He claimed that the installation of Gerald Ford and soon, a new vice president, will mean many more years of GOP control over the White House.

"Politically, the Democrats have got themselves out of the White House for a long time," Fong said. "I think their aim was not to go this far, but when the President said he held off some evidence, the bottom fell out."

Fong's Democratic counterpart, Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, said he was grateful that Nixon's resignation spared him the agony of a Senate trial.



FONG

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I have today instructed my attorneys to make available to the House Judiciary Committee, and I am making public, the transcripts of three conversations with H. R. Haldeman on June 23, 1972. I have also turned over the tapes of these conversations to Judge Sirica, as part of the process of my compliance with the Supreme Court ruling.

On April 29, in announcing my decision to make public the original set of White House transcripts, I stated that "as far as what the President personally knew and did with regard to Watergate and the cover-up is concerned, these materials -- together with those already made available -- will tell it all."

Shortly after that, in May, I made a preliminary review of some of the 64 taped conversations subpoenaed by the Special Prosecutor.

Among the conversations I listened to at that time were two of those of June 23. Although I recognized that these presented potential problems, I did not inform my staff or my Counsel of it, or those arguing my case, nor did I amend my submission to the Judiciary Committee in order to include and reflect it. At the time, I did not realize the extent of the implications which these conversations might now appear to have. As a result, those arguing my case, as well as those passing judgment on the case, did so with information that was incomplete and in some respects erroneous. This was a serious act of omission for which I take full responsibility and which I deeply regret.

Since the Supreme Court's decision twelve days ago, I have ordered my Counsel to analyze the 64 tapes, and I have listened to a number of them myself. This process has made it clear that portions of the tapes of these June 23 conversations are at variance with certain of my previous statements. Therefore, I have ordered the transcripts made available immediately to the Judiciary Committee so that they can be reflected in the Committee's report, and included in the record to be considered by the House and 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 FBI 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 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 recollection at the time -- some eleven months later -- plus documentary materials and relevant public testimony of those involved.

The June 23 tapes clearly show, however, that at the time I gave those instructions I also discussed the political aspects of the situation, and that I was 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.

My review of the additional tapes has, so far, shown no other major inconsistencies with what I have previously submitted. While I have no way at this stage of being certain that there will not be others, I have no reason to believe that there will be. In any case, the tapes in their entirety are now in the process of being furnished to Judge Sirica. He has begun what may be a rather lengthy process of reviewing the tapes, passing on specific claims of executive privilege on portions of them, and forwarding to the Special Prosecutor those tapes or those portions that are relevant to the Watergate investigation.

It is highly unlikely that this review will be completed in time for the House debate. It appears at this stage, however, that a House vote of impeachment is, as a practical matter, virtually a foregone conclusion, and that the issue will therefore go to trial in the Senate. In order to ensure that no other significant relevant materials are withheld, I shall voluntarily furnish to the Senate everything from these tapes that Judge Sirica rules should go to the Special Prosecutor.

I recognize that this additional material I am now furnishing may further damage my case, especially because attention will be drawn separately to it rather than to the evidence in its entirety. In considering its implications, therefore, I urge that two points be borne in mind.

The first of these points is to remember what actually happened as a result of the instructions I gave on June 23. Acting Director Gray of the FBI did coordinate with Director Helms and Deputy Director Walters of the CIA. The CIA did undertake an extensive check to see whether any of its covert activities would be compromised by a full FBI investigation of Watergate. Deputy Director Walters then reported back to Mr. Gray that they would not be compromised. On July 6, when I called Mr. Gray, and when he expressed concern about improper attempts to limit his investigation, as the record shows, I told him to press ahead vigorously with his investigation -- which he did.

The second point I would urge is that the evidence be looked at in its entirety, and the events be looked at in perspective. Whatever mistakes I made in the handling of Watergate, the basic truth remains that when all the facts were brought to my attention I insisted on a full investigation and prosecution of those guilty. I am firmly convinced that the record, in its entirety, does not justify the extreme step of impeachment and removal of a President. I trust that as the Constitutional process goes forward, this perspective will prevail.

# # #

ROBERT P. GRIFFIN  
MICHIGAN

C O P Y

United States Senate

OFFICE OF  
THE ASSISTANT MINORITY LEADER  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

August 3, 1974

U.S. SENATE  
OFFICE OF CLERK  
HIRSH L. FONG

AUG 5 1974

P.R. 1  
100-456

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

There is no doubt in my mind that, unless you choose to resign, the House of Representatives will adopt Articles of Impeachment, making necessary a trial in the Senate.

Of course, it is incumbent upon Senators, who would have to sit as judges, to reserve final judgment with respect to guilt or innocence. However, I do not consider it inappropriate for a Senator, at this stage, to indicate what he will regard as an impeachable offense.

As you consider the options now available, I want you to know of my strong view that:

1. The Senate, if required to do so, will subpoena the same tapes which you have refused to provide to the House;
2. Particularly in light of the recent Supreme Court decision, you will stand in contempt of the Senate and the Constitution if you refuse at that point to provide the Senate with the tapes or absolute evidence that they contain no relevant information; and
3. Furthermore, I want you to know now that if you should defy such a subpoena, I shall regard that as an impeachable offense and shall vote accordingly.

You may be assured that I have reached these particular conclusions only after very careful deliberation. A copy of this letter is being made available to my Senate colleagues.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Griffin  
U. S. Senator

RPG:rb