

STATEMENT BY VICE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON, D. C.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 11, 1974

Monday, August 5, 1974

CONTACT :

Paul Miltich

456-2364

I have not listened to the tapes nor have I read the transcripts of the <sup>President's</sup> conversations with Mr. Haldeman ~~to which the President~~ ~~released his statement~~. Without knowing what was said and the context of it ~~my comment would serve no useful purpose and I~~ shall have none.

Indeed, I have come to the conclusion that the public interest is ~~not~~ no longer ~~in~~ served by ~~endless~~ repetition of my previously expressed belief that on the basis of all the evidence known to me, and to the ~~public~~ American people the President is not guilty of an impeachable offense under the Constitutional definition of "treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors." ~~That is still my view, but~~ <sup>inasmuch</sup> as additional evidence is about to be forthcoming from the President, which he says may be damaging, I intend to respectfully decline to discuss impeachment matters in public or in response to questions until the facts are more fully available.

The whole truth should be the objective of <sup>the</sup> trial before the Senate, and I commend the President for his willingness to furnish voluntarily <sup>by Judge Sirica</sup> to the Senate everything ruled ~~to be relevant~~ from the additional tapes. Under the Constitution the Vice President is relieved of his role as Presiding Officer of the Senate when it sits to ~~try~~ try a President on ~~charges~~ <sup>impeachment</sup> charges. The wisdom of this provision is obvious, for the Vice President regardless of his personal feelings is a party of interest as the Constitutional successor if a President is removed from office. Since President Andrew Johnson was himself a Vice President who succeeded to the Presidency upon the death of Abraham Lincoln, and no provision then existed for filling

a vacancy in the Vice Presidency, there are no precedents to guide me except my own common sense and <sup>my</sup> conscience. Both tell me to let my ~~widely known~~ <sup>widely known</sup> views on the impeachment issue stand until I have reason to change them and to refuse further comment ~~at this time~~ <sup>at this time</sup> as the Congressional debate unfolds.

There is another compelling reason for my decision. When I was nominated by the President to be Vice President <sup>ten</sup> ~~eight~~ months ago, I promised the Congress that confirmed me <sup>that I would</sup> ~~to~~ do my very best ~~to~~ to be a calm communicator and ready conciliator between the Executive and Legislative branches of our Federal government. I have done so. But in the impeachment process the President and the Congress are now in an adversary relationship which <sup>as</sup> deeply divides the legislators as it does the people they represent.

There are many urgent matters on America's agenda in which I hope to continue to serve <sup>this great country</sup> ~~the President and the Congress~~ as a communicator and conciliator. The business of government ~~must~~ must go on and the genuine needs of the people must be served. I believe I can make a better contribution to this end by not involving myself daily in the impeachment debate, in which I have no Constitutional role.



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The whole truth should be the objective of the trial before the Senate. Under the Constitution the Vice President is relieved of his role as Presiding Officer of the Senate when it sits to try a President on impeachment charges. The wisdom of this provision is obvious, for the Vice President regardless of his personal feelings is a party of interest as the Constitutional successor if a President is removed from office. Since President Andrew Johnson was himself a Vice President who succeeded to the Presidency upon the death of Abraham Lincoln, and no provision then existed for filling a vacancy in the Vice Presidency, there are no precedents to guide me except my own common sense and my conscience. Both tell me to let my widely known views on the impeachment issue stand until I have reason to change them and to refuse further comment at this time.

There is another compelling reason for my decision. When I was nominated by the President to be Vice President ten months ago, I promised the Congress that confirmed me that I would do my very best to be a calm communicator and ready conciliator between the Executive and Legislative branches of our Federal government. I have done so. But in the impeachment process the President and the Congress are now in an adversary relationship which as deeply divides the legislators as it does the people they represent.

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