

STATEMENT FROM THE OVAL OFFICE
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1974, 10:45 A.M.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I HAVE COME TO A DECISION WHICH I
FELT I SHOULD TELL YOU, AND ALL MY FELLOW CITIZENS, AS SOON AS I WAS
CERTAIN IN MY OWN MIND AND CONSCIENCE THAT IT IS THE RIGHT THING
TO DO.



I HAVE LEARNED ALREADY IN THIS OFFICE THAT ONLY THE DIFFICULT DECISIONS COME TO THIS DESK. I MUST ADMIT THAT MANY OF THEM DO NOT LOOK AT ALL THE SAME AS THE HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS THAT I HAVE ANSWERED FREELY AND PERHAPS TOO FAST ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS. MY CUSTOMARY POLICY IS TO TRY AND GET ALL THE FACTS AND TO CONSIDER THE OPINIONS OF MY COUNTRYMEN AND TO TAKE COUNSEL WITH MY MOST VALUED FRIENDS. BUT THESE SELDOM AGREE, AND IN THE END THE DECISION IS MINE.



TO PROCRASTINATE, ~~TO AGONIZE,~~ ~~TO WAIT~~ FOR A MORE FAVORABLE
TURN OF EVENTS THAT MAY NEVER COME, OR MORE COMPELLING EXTERNAL
PRESSURES THAT MAY AS WELL BE WRONG AS RIGHT, IS ITSELF A DECISION
OF SORTS AND A WEAK AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS COURSE FOR A
PRESIDENT TO FOLLOW.



I HAVE PROMISED TO UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTION, TO DO WHAT
IS RIGHT AS GOD GIVES ME TO SEE THE RIGHT, AND TO DO THE VERY
BEST I CAN FOR AMERICA. I HAVE ASKED YOUR HELP AND YOUR PRAYERS,
NOT ONLY WHEN I BECAME PRESIDENT, BUT MANY TIMES SINCE.



THE CONSTITUTION IS THE SUPREME LAW OF OUR LAND AND IT GOVERNS OUR ACTIONS AS CITIZENS, ONLY THE LAWS OF GOD, WHICH GOVERN OUR CONSCIENCES, ARE SUPERIOR TO IT. AS WE ARE A NATION UNDER GOD, SO I AM SWORN TO UPHOLD OUR LAWS WITH THE HELP OF GOD. AND I HAVE SOUGHT SUCH GUIDANCE AND SEARCHED MY OWN CONSCIENCE WITH SPECIAL DILIGENCE TO DETERMINE THE RIGHT THING FOR ME TO DO WITH RESPECT TO MY PREDECESSOR IN THIS PLACE, RICHARD NIXON, AND HIS LOYAL WIFE AND FAMILY.



THEIRS IS AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY IN WHICH WE ALL HAVE
PLAYED A PART. IT CAN GO ON AND ON AND ON, OR SOMEONE MUST WRITE
"THE END" TO IT.

I HAVE CONCLUDED THAT ONLY I CAN DO THAT. AND IF I CAN,
I MUST.



THERE ARE NO HISTORIC OR LEGAL PRECEDENTS TO WHICH I CAN
TURN IN THIS MATTER, NONE THAT PRECISELY FIT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF
A PRIVATE CITIZEN WHO HAS RESIGNED THE PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED STATES.
BUT IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS AND ACCUSATIONS
HANG LIKE A SWORD OVER OUR FORMER PRESIDENT'S HEAD AS HE TRIES TO
RESHAPE HIS LIFE, A GREAT PART OF WHICH WAS SPENT IN THE SERVICE
OF THIS COUNTRY AND BY THE MANDATE OF ITS PEOPLE.

threatening his health

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AFTER YEARS OF BITTER CONTROVERSY AND DIVISIVE NATIONAL
DEBATE, I HAVE BEEN ADVISED AND AM COMPELLED TO CONCLUDE THAT
MANY MONTHS AND PERHAPS MORE YEARS WILL HAVE TO PASS BEFORE
RICHARD NIXON COULD HOPE TO OBTAIN A FAIR TRIAL BY JURY IN ANY
JURISDICTION OF THE UNITED STATES UNDER GOVERNING DECISIONS OF THE
SUPREME COURT.



I DEEPLY BELIEVE IN EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL AMERICANS,
WHATEVER THEIR STATION OR FORMER STATION. THE LAW, WHETHER HUMAN
OR DIVINE, IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS BUT THE LAW IS A RESPECTER
OF REALITY. THE FACTS AS I SEE THEM ARE THAT A FORMER PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED STATES, INSTEAD OF ENJOYING EQUAL TREATMENT WITH
ANY OTHER CITIZEN ACCUSED OF VIOLATING THE LAW, WOULD BE CRUELLY
AND EXCESSIVELY PENALIZED EITHER IN PRESERVING THE PRESUMPTION OF
HIS INNOCENCE OR IN OBTAINING A SPEEDY DETERMINATION OF HIS GUILT
IN ORDER TO REPAY A LEGAL DEBT TO SOCIETY.



DURING THIS LONG PERIOD OF DELAY AND POTENTIAL LITIGATION,
UGLY PASSIONS WOULD AGAIN BE AROUSED, OUR PEOPLE WOULD AGAIN BE
POLARIZED IN THEIR OPINIONS, AND THE CREDIBILITY OF OUR FREE
INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT WOULD AGAIN BE CHALLENGED AT HOME AND ABROAD.
IN THE END, THE COURTS MIGHT WELL HOLD THAT RICHARD NIXON HAD BEEN
DENIED DUE PROCESS AND THE VERDICT OF HISTORY WOULD BE EVEN MORE
INCONCLUSIVE WITH RESPECT TO THOSE CHARGES ARISING OUT OF THE PERIOD
OF HIS PRESIDENCY OF WHICH I AM PRESENTLY AWARE.



BUT IT IS NOT THE ULTIMATE FATE OF RICHARD NIXON THAT
MOST CONCERNS ME -- THOUGH SURELY IT DEEPLY TROUBLES EVERY DECENT
MY CONCERN IS
AND COMPASSIONATE PERSON, ~~== BUT~~ THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE OF THIS GREAT
COUNTRY. IN THIS I DARE NOT DEPEND UPON MY PERSONAL SYMPATHY AS
A LONGTIME FRIEND OF THE FORMER PRESIDENT NOR MY PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT
AS A LAWYER. AND I DO NOT.



AS PRESIDENT, MY PRIMARY CONCERN MUST ALWAYS BE THE
GREATEST GOOD OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES, WHOSE SERVANT
I AM.

AS A MAN, MY FIRST CONSIDERATION ^{is} ~~WILL ALWAYS BE~~ TO BE
TRUE TO MY OWN CONVICTIONS AND MY OWN CONSCIENCE.



MY CONSCIENCE TELLS ME CLEARLY AND CERTAINLY THAT I CANNOT PROLONG THE BAD DREAMS THAT CONTINUE TO REOPEN A CHAPTER THAT IS CLOSED. MY CONSCIENCE TELLS ME THAT ONLY I, AS PRESIDENT, HAVE THE CONSTITUTIONAL POWER TO FIRMLY SHUT AND SEAL THIS BOOK. MY CONSCIENCE SAYS IT IS MY DUTY, NOT MERELY TO PROCLAIM DOMESTIC TRANQUILLITY, BUT TO USE EVERY MEANS I HAVE TO ENSURE IT.



I DO BELIEVE THAT THE BUCK STOPS HERE AND THAT I CANNOT
RELY UPON PUBLIC OPINION POLLS TO TELL ME WHAT IS RIGHT. I DO
BELIEVE THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND THAT IF I AM WRONG TEN ANGELS
SWEARING I WAS RIGHT WOULD MAKE NO DIFFERENCE. I DO BELIEVE WITH
ALL MY HEART AND MIND AND SPIRIT THAT I, NOT AS PRESIDENT, BUT AS
A HUMBLE SERVANT OF GOD, WILL RECEIVE JUSTICE WITHOUT MERCY IF I
FAIL TO SHOW MERCY.



FINALLY, I FEEL THAT RICHARD NIXON AND HIS LOVED ONES HAVE
SUFFERED ENOUGH, AND WILL CONTINUE TO SUFFER NO MATTER WHAT I DO,
NO MATTER WHAT WE AS A GREAT AND GOOD NATION CAN DO TOGETHER TO
MAKE HIS GOAL OF PEACE COME TRUE.



NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, PURSUANT TO THE PARDON POWER CONFERRED UPON ME BY ARTICLE II, SECTION 2, OF THE CONSTITUTION, HAVE GRANTED AND BY THESE PRESENTS DO GRANT A FULL, FREE, AND ABSOLUTE PARDON UNTO RICHARD NIXON FOR ALL OFFENSES AGAINST THE UNITED STATES WHICH HE, RICHARD NIXON, HAS COMMITTED OR MAY HAVE COMMITTED OR TAKEN PART IN DURING THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 20, 1969 THROUGH AUGUST 9, 1974.



(SIGN DOCUMENT)

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND THIS
8TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-FOUR, AND OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA THE 199TH.

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