**(9:14) President Nixon’s Resignation Speech (1974)**

Source: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/spc/character/links/nixon_speech.html>

**Background:** Richard Nixon was the 37th president of the United States, serving from 1969 to 1974. He faced impeachment and removal from office for “dirty tricks” during the 1972 election campaign and for using the office of the Presidency to cover-up illegal activity. Nixon is the only President to resign from office in United States history.

**Questions to Consider**

1. In his speech to the American people, why did Nixon claim he was resigning from office?

2. What is missing from this speech?

3. In your opinion, should President Nixon have been threatened with removal from office and pressured to resign? Explain.

A. 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 such 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.”

B. “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 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. 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.”

C. “When I first took the oath of office as President 51/2 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.”