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O 091531Z MAY 74
FM THE SITUATION ROOM//TOHAK 127//

TO BREMER FOR THE SECRETARY

UNCLAS VIA 86970 WH41235

TOHAK 127

FROM: THE SITUATION ROOM
TO: BREMER/RODMAN FOR THE SECRETARY
UPI 44

(NIXON)

(ADV FOR 11 A.M. EDT)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER JOHN RHODES SAID TODAY THE RESIGNATION BY PRESIDENT NIXON WOULD PROBABLY BE BENEFICIAL TO THE GOP.

"I FEEL IF THE PRESIDENT COMES TO THE CONCLUSION HE CAN NO LONGER BE EFFECTIVE AS PRESIDENT, HE WILL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT," RHODES SAID. "IF HE SHOULD RESIGN I WOULD ACCEPT IT."

RHODES MADE THE REMARKS IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS AT A BREAKFAST MEETING WITH A GROUP OF REPORTERS.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE SESSION WAS A LONG STANDING COMMITMENT AND SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS A SNUB TO NIXON WHO HAS SUMMONED GOP LEADERS TO THE WHITE HOUSE FOR BRIEFING ON THE ECONOMY. RHODES MISSED THAT MEETING.

RHODES WAS ASKED: "WOULD A RESIGNATION HELP THE REPUBLICAN PARTY THIS FALL?"

HE REPLIED: "A RESIGNATION WOULD PROBABLY BE BENEFICIAL BUT I'M NOT RECOMMENDING IT."

RHODES SAID THAT HE NOW ESTIMATED THE VOTE IN THE HOUSE IS 51 PER CENT TO 49 PER CENT AGAINST IMPEACHMENT BUT SAID CHANCES OF IMPEACHMENT HAD INCREASED SINCE RELEASE OF THE WATERGATE TRANSCRIPTS.

HE DESCRIBED THE CONTENTS OF THE TRANSCRIPTS AS "CERTAINLY DEVASTATING" BUT SAID THAT HE HAD A COMPLETELY OPEN MIND ON THE QUESTION OF IMPEACHMENT.

RHODES WAS ASKED WHETHER REPUBLICAN LEADERS WERE CONSIDERING APPROACHING NIXON TO URGE HIM TO RESIGN. "I KNOW OF NO DEFINITE PLAN AT THIS TIME," HE SAID. "BUT IF THE PRESIDENT SHOULD BE IMPEACHED, HE SHOULD HAVE RESIGNATION VERY HIGH ON HIS LIST TO

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THINK ABOUT."

RHODES SAW A "DANGER" WHEN NEWSPAPERS SUCH AS THE HEARST
GROUP, THE OMAHA WORLD HERALD AND CHICAGO TRIBUNE CALL FOR
NIXON'S RESIGNATION OR IMPEACHMENT.

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