

Nixon Urges Hill To Cut Spending As '1st Priority'

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President Nixon told a skeptical Congress yesterday that its "first priority" in the remainder of this session must be to control federal spending to help in the battle against inflation.

But he said that savings must be in domestic programs rather than by "slashing the defense budget."

Further defense cuts would be "dangerously irresponsible," he said, adding that he will veto "any bill that includes cuts which would imperil our national security."

In what he described as a special State of the Union message, the President appealed to Congress to enact some 50 bills he has sent to the Capitol this year. For the most part, his tone was conciliatory, and he promised to work for compromise settlements in most areas.

However, he said that in three areas he would not compromise: on the need for budgetary discipline, on the preservation of presidential powers and on the requirement for a strong defense.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.), author of a proposal to cut troop strength in Europe, declared: "If we are not careful, we will defend ourselves into bankruptcy."

Mansfield promised, however, that Congress would give expeditious consideration to the President's proposals and said he felt that both sides would prefer negotiation to fighting. But he said the President was "asking too much" in his demand that no reductions be made in the defense budget.

Speaker of the House Carl Albert, after a breakfast meeting with the President, said Mr. Nixon "feels his willingness to compromise is genuine. But what we might call a compromise might go too far with him and his views might go too far for us."

The President's lengthy message, designed to focus national attention away from Watergate and back to his legislative proposals, acknowledged that all his proposals could not be enacted this year.

But he urged Congress to redouble its efforts, particularly in the energy field, and he made a special appeal for his foreign trade bill. He again stressed his opposition to tax increases and to busing to achieve racial balance in the schools. He renewed his promise to work for "effective self-government" for the District of Columbia.

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Presidential counselor Melvin R. Laird, speaking to a luncheon meeting of the Republican National Committee, celebrated a "spirit of compromise" he said was now prevailing in Congress. He said that a change in congressional attitudes had occurred because congressmen had found during their August recess that the American public wants action on Mr. Nixon's domestic programs.

Laird predicted that special revenue sharing legislation for schools would be passed before the end of the session. He also said that Congress would approve the Better Communities Act, a special revenue sharing bill intended to replace many urban categorical grant programs.

Laird, first-term Defense Secretary in the Nixon administration, also said that the United States will have "no chance of success" in renewed arms control talks with the Soviet Union if Congress cuts the defense budget. If U.S. military strength is preserved, Laird said, it will be possible to win new arms control agreements, including reduction of Soviet forces in Eastern European nations.

"Strength, partnership and the willingness to negotiate" are the cornerstones of the Nixon doctrine in foreign policy, Laird said.

"If we're going to be successful in negotiation, this strength and partnership are absolutely essential," he added.

The President in his message declared that he welcomed "a congressional renaissance" but would continue to "oppose all efforts to strip the presidency of the powers it must have to be effective."

"There can be no monopoly of wisdom on either end of Pennsylvania Avenue—and there should be no monopoly of power," he asserted.

The President chided Congress for approving legislation that would inflate his budget by \$2 billion in the current fiscal year. If Congress follows its present course, his spending ceiling will be exceeded by \$7 billion, Mr. Nixon said.

He maintained that defense economies already have been made to the lowest safe point.

"In constant dollars, our defense spending in this fiscal year will be \$10 billion less than was spent in 1964, before the Vietnam war began," he said. "Our defense forces are at the lowest level since the days just before the Korean War, and a smaller part of our gross national product is being spent on defense than in any year since 1950."

It will be impossible to achieve mutual troop reductions in Central Europe if unilateral cuts are ordered, he argued.

The Senate, he charged, has voted "a staggering and unacceptable cut of 156,000 men in our military manpower" and is considering a unilateral troop withdrawal measure "that could be a serious unraveling of the NATO alliance."

He also charged that Congress is attempting to cut by a fourth to a half the military aid program. "I cannot stand by while these crucial programs are gutted in haste and reaction," Mr. Nixon said.

To meet the energy crisis, the President urged prompt enactment of seven measures he has proposed. But, recognizing that all cannot be passed this year, he urged that four be given priority. They would authorize construction of the Alaska pipeline, construction of deepwater ports, deregulation of natural gas, and provide new standards for strip mining of coal.

He did not specify where the deepwater ports might be constructed, but the government has studied the possibility of building such facilities on the Delaware Bay, in Puerto Rico, near New Orleans and on the Galveston Bay in Texas.

Referring to a Watergate-

related issue, the President said that in view of the interest of the public and Congress in election reform he was "at a loss to understand why only the Senate has acted" on his request to establish a non-partisan commission on election reform.

He again called for restoration of the death penalty for treason, assassination and acts of sabotage and espionage.