

Talk Builds Pressure for Probe End

Nixon Left Many Dissatisfied

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President Nixon has apparently succeeded in building pressure for a quick windup of the Senate's Watergate investigation, but his latest effort to explain his role in the case has left virtually all Democratic and many Republican legislators dissatisfied.

With editorial reaction to Wednesday night's radio-television address decidedly mixed, and any real measure of public opinion several days away, White House officials were cautious in judging the impact of the President's speech.

Press spokesman Gerald L. Warren said telegrams and telephone calls were running 5 or 6 to 1 in support of Mr. Nixon, but another official said, "The reaction that counts is not what comes today, but next week or the week after that."

Two strong—and somewhat surprising—facts that drew comment among the politicians yesterday were the number of Democrats who supported Mr. Nixon's suggestion that Watergate investigation be "turned over to the courts," and the number of Republicans who expressed "disappointment" at the President's failure to

provide detailed rebuttal of the charges leveled against him in the 37 days of Senate hearings.

But the mixed reaction was neither surprising nor disheartening to the White House, where one official intimately involved with the Wednesday night speech said it was "not designed to get people racing into the streets but to get them thinking."

The most heartening development, from the President's viewpoint, was the support he drew from diverse Democrats for his argument that continued preoccupation with the televised hearings of the Senate select investigating committee was dangerously diverting attention from urgent national problems.

See **IMPACT**, A3, Col. 1

IMPACT, From A1

Senate Democratic Whip Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.), while expressing the prevailing "disappointment that President Nixon did not answer the nagging questions ... about the Watergate scandal," said he thought the Senate committee should complete its work without television cameras and allow "the Watergate matter to be finally resolved in the courts."

Both Rep. Gillis Long (D-La.), a Southern moderate, and Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D-Mich.), a leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, said it was time the Watergate committee shut down.

"The committee has done a tremendous job in bringing the realities of the situation to the people," Conyers said, "but we've all been shocked, amazed and horrified enough. It's all downhill now."

Sen. Edward J. Gurney (R-Fla.), a member of the investigation panel, reiterated his previous statements that the "hearings have dragged on far too long and ... should be concluded speed-

ily." But Gurney found no immediate support for this view among his six committee colleagues.

Instead, Committee Chairman Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.) said that if the President wants the Senate investigation completed, he should release the tapes of his White House conversations, which the committee had subpoenaed. Mr. Nixon said Wednesday he could not release the tapes without "crippling" all future Presidents by breaching the confidentiality of the Oval Office.

"If the President wants the investigation to end quickly," Ervin said in Gastonia, N.C., "he, more than any other human being, can speed completion of that



Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii), right, of the Senate's Watergate committee, as he watched President's speech with family and friends. / United Press International

work" by releasing the tapes.

Ervin's office said telegrams he received after the Nixon speech ran 5 to 1 in favor of a continuation of the investigation, the Associated Press reported.

A number of Republican legislators backed the President's call for a shift of the Watergate case to the (R-Ariz.), chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee, said "most of the Arizonians I have talked to would be glad to sacrifice their preoccupation with Watergate for solutions to our nation's problems."

But leading figures from both the liberal and conservative wings of the GOP were outspoken in expressing dissatisfaction with the skimpiness of the President's rebuttal.

Rep. Barry Goldwater Jr. (R-Calif.), whose father had already pronounced the Wednesday speech unsatisfactory, said it was ironic that Mr. Nixon "asks for the trust of the American people, but he doesn't trust them enough to hear the tapes."

Rep. John M. Ashbrook (R-Ohio), another leading conservative, said the address "added very little to the total picture" and "overlooked the basic operating factor" that caused Watergate — "absolute, unswerving loyalty to the President."

On the other flank, Michigan Gov. William G. Milliken, a liberal Republican, said he "had hoped that a documentation — perhaps through a partial release of the tapes — would help put the case to rest."

As it is, he said, Mr. Nixon may have helped his cause "to some extent, but not as much as I had hoped, nor I think as much as he had hoped."

Indicative of the cautious Republican reaction were these words from Rep. John B. Anderson of Illinois, chairman of the House Republican Conference:

"The President is banking very heavily on his political instinct that the public is suffering from an overdose of Watergate, that the people's attention span has been broken, and that his taking the offensive will strike a very responsive chord.

"It's true," Anderson said, "there are a significant number who refer to the Watergate committee as 'that bunch of clowns.' But I feel that underneath that, there is a larger group that is still very disturbed. I don't think they're prepared to just dismiss it as some kind of obsession.

"I don't think the speech will frankly be all that helpful," Anderson said.

Among Democrats, the reaction to the speech ranged from boredom to scorn. Maryland Gov. Marvin Mandel told reporters his eyes closed one-third of the way through the talk and a few minutes later he was asleep.

Gov. Thomas Salmon of Vermont said it was "an affront to the American people" and Gov. Kenneth Curtis of Maine declared himself "offended" by the President's "self-serving rhetoric."

Without intending to, Mr. Nixon embroiled himself in a fresh dispute with some political and religious figures over his comparison of the Watergate crimes to the civil disturbances of the 1960s. The President argued that both represented the danger of anyone setting himself above the law.

The Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, chairman of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, said in Indianapolis that the President's analogy was "the height of hypocrisy and the depth of defamation of character."

"If Nixon says Watergate was merely civil disobedience," Lowery said, then the President and his accused former aides "should march down to the jail" and submit to arrest, as some civil rights leaders had done.

A statement signed by the Rev. W. Sterling Cary, president of the National Council of Churches, and leaders of the Episcopal, United Presbyterian and United Church of Christ denominations, declared it "distressing that the President ... saw fit to equate with lawlessness the public expression of sorrow and indignation about war and injustice."

"It is an affront to those religious principles to which we give our primary loyalty to have the non-violent civil rights struggle of the 1960s and the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations viewed by the President as being as heinous as the alleged criminal actions of members of his staff in the Watergate break-ins and coverups," the clergymen said.

Editorial comment in the nation's newspapers yesterday was mixed, with the Atlanta Journal perhaps summing up best with the remark that the President's talk "may have comforted his friends, but it did not satisfy his critics."

That reaction was just about what the President expected, according to half-a-dozen White House aides.

"It didn't do the trick, but it wasn't expected to do it," said one presidential assistant. "The point was not to lead public opinion, but to capitalize on the opinion that exists."

Another aide called the speech "the first step back," but quickly added that "it's a long road, and it's unrealistic to think he's going to

make up large chunks of ground."

While some presidential assistants conceded that "a mistake may have been made in leading people to believe they were going to get a lot of new facts," others said they expected Mr. Nixon to quell that criticism at his promised press conference expected later this month.

Meantime, comments reaching White House legislative liaison and political figures indicated that at least the President's supporters felt the tone of his response, which one aide described as "firm but not antagonistic," had struck listeners right.

Despite some adverse comments, several presidential assistants said they had been told that Mr. Nixon's defense of his decision to withhold the tapes had been well received by part of his audience.

"My father told me that on the train into New York this morning, people told him that for the first time they were convinced the President had a case," said one assistant.

A congressional liaison man said he had taken calls from 10 senators and two dozen representatives and "all but two were positive and supportive. These were basically our friends," he said, "but they came from both parties."