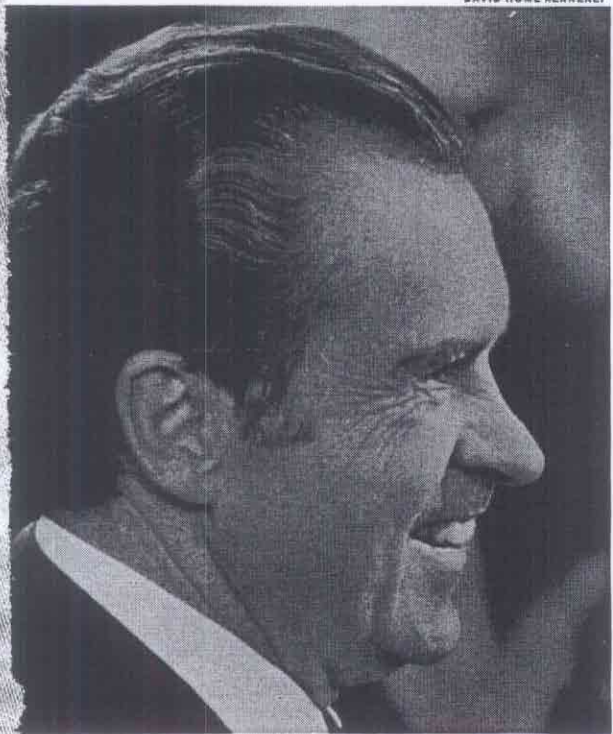


# The President Performs Under Pressure

It was a unique and poignant fragment for history. A President who stands in clear and imminent danger of impeachment faced the members of the House who may within weeks become his inquisitors and the Senators who may then have to decide whether he has been guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors and must therefore be removed from office. Once again, drawing upon a resilient inner reserve of stamina, an embattled Richard Nixon rose to the challenge. Although his formal text was unremarkable, his manner was controlled, his delivery forceful, and his attitude unyielding. He looked healthier than he has in months. If many in his au-

DAVID HUME KENNERLY



NIXON DURING STATE OF UNION ADDRESS  
A resilient reserve of stamina.

dience sensed that this might well be Nixon's final State of the Union address, the President gave not the slightest sign that he shared their view.

Partly out of its traditional respect for the office of the presidency, perhaps also out of genuine empathy for him in his lonely predicament, however self-inflicted, the Congress gave Nixon a more than perfunctory welcome. As he extolled the accomplishments of his five years in office with campaign-style hyperbole and drew an unrealistically cheery sketch of the current state of the union, he was applauded 36 times.

Yet the sights and sounds were deceptive. For both Nixon and his most ardent defenders, the occasion was, properly enough, a performance. After the initial ceremonial greeting, the applause

came almost entirely from the Republican side of the House chamber. It was repeatedly led by a shouting group of cheerleaders at the rear of the G.O.P. ranks, while the Democrats generally listened in silence. Twice, standing ovations were precipitated by a justifiably partisan gallery observer: Pat Nixon.\* She rose, was followed by other members of the First Family and close aides, and the movement then spread to the Republican side of the floor.

While Nixon looked trim and vigorous, considering his long year of personal ordeal, the pancake makeup did not conceal recently acquired facial lines. He perspired more freely than ever. In a classic slip of the tongue, he read a line about the need to replace "the discredited present welfare program" as the need to replace the "discredited President," then corrected himself.

The speech was studded with applause-catching lines, well tested in past Nixon appearances. In urging welfare reform, Nixon deplored any program "which makes it more profitable to go on welfare than to go to work." Taking credit for the U.S. disengagement from Viet Nam, he said that American prisoners of war "came home with their heads high, on their feet and not on their knees." Using the word peace no fewer than 27 times in 43 minutes, he was applauded six times for references to the nation's strength, honor or freedom, and nine times for optimistic predictions about the economy, including the ringing declaration: "There will be no recession in the United States of America."

Nixon's message was that his foreign policy achievements were historic, that peace was still of overriding national concern, and that he was indispensable to its maintenance. He indicated that he will now turn to domestic legislation with a new urgency, although he suggested only two really innovative proposals: 1) a national health insurance program that will largely depend upon the purchase of private group insurance by employers for their workers and will require no new taxes ("We must always make sure that our doctors will be working for their patients and not for the Federal Government"); and

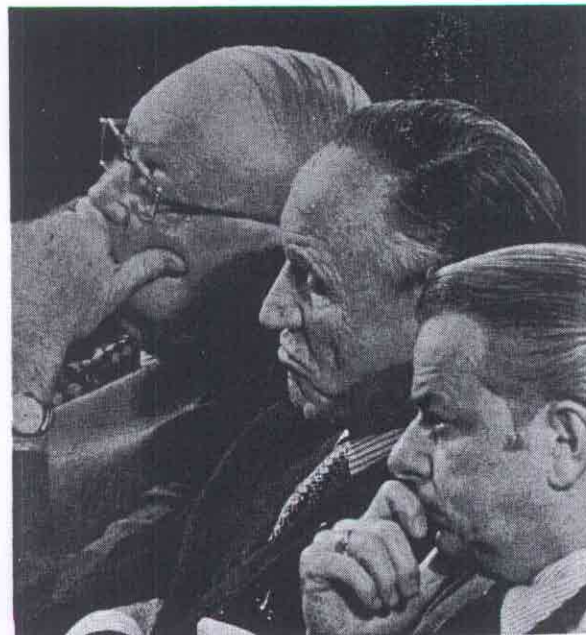
\*In a rare display of emotion, the normally cool First Lady last week sharply defended her husband at a White House tea. Waving her hand at a reporter who asked if the President was sleeping well, she declared: "He is in great health and I love him dearly and I have great faith."



G.O.P. SENATORS GRIFFIN & SCOTT APPLAUD

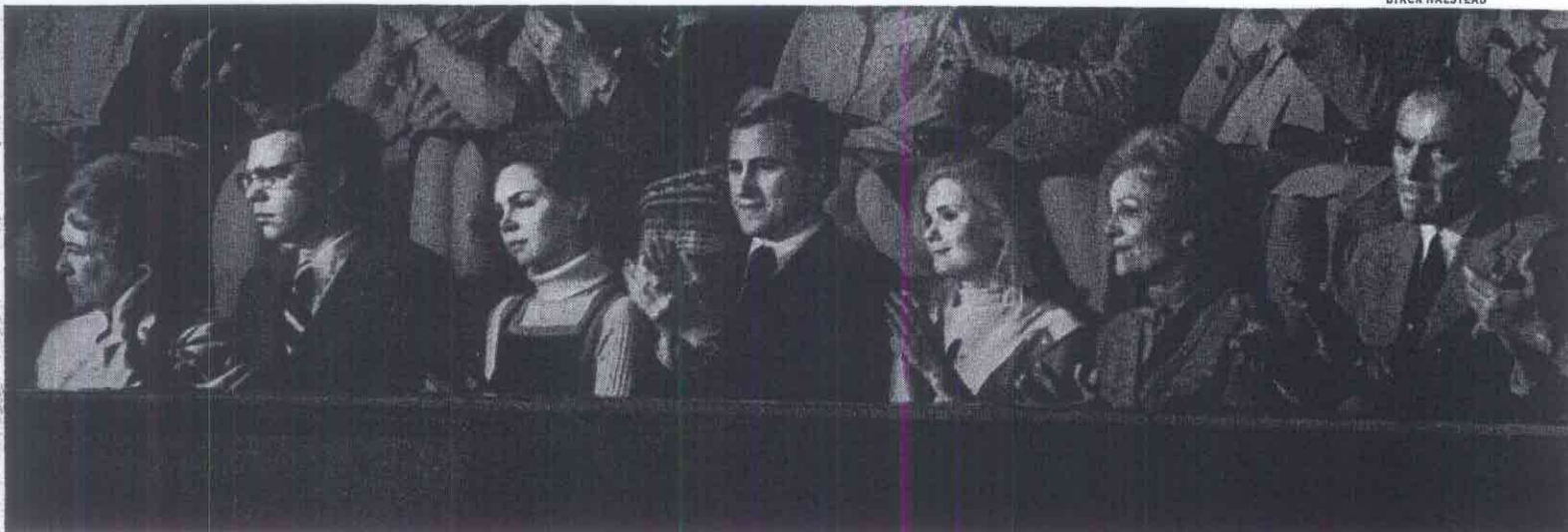
2) a welfare-reform program that will rely heavily on a still-to-be-defined guarantee of a minimum income for all families. Nixon's only surprise was his statement that Middle East oil ministers plan to meet soon to consider lifting the embargo against exports to the U.S. Other U.S. officials confirmed that he referred to a previously announced Feb. 14 meeting in Tripoli (*see ENERGY*).

But how Nixon would treat his Watergate problems was, of course, the most eagerly anticipated part of his appearance. In his formal address, he slipped in one oblique hint of his determination



DEMOCRATS EASTLAND, MANSFIELD & BYRD LISTEN





NIXON FANS IN GALLERY: ROSE MARY WOODS, DAVID EISENHOWER, JULIE EISENHOWER, ED COX, TRICIA COX, MRS. NIXON, GENERAL HAIG

to ride out the storm. Peace, he said, is "the chief legacy I hope to leave in the eight years of my presidency." The backbench Republicans caught it at once and launched a cheering, standing salute.

When Nixon concluded and set aside his prepared text, but then paused, the moment obviously was at hand. Speaking without notes and with considerable feeling, Nixon then addressed himself to "the so-called Watergate affair." He seemed to be saying that he had cooperated long enough with Special Watergate Prosecutor Leon Jaworski. Said Nixon: "I believe that I have provided all the material that he needs to conclude his investigations and to proceed to prosecute the guilty and to clear the innocent." The investigations must end, Nixon declared. "One year of Watergate is enough."

**Time to Pray.** As for the House Judiciary Committee, Nixon did not mention specifically its impeachment inquiry. Instead, he delicately conceded that the committee has "a special responsibility." Then Nixon drew premature applause from both sides of the House by saying: "I will cooperate with the Judiciary Committee in its investigation..." But as the clapping died, Nixon threw in a critical qualification: "... in any way I consider consistent with my responsibilities for the office of the presidency." He will do nothing, he explained, that "weakens the office of the President." Nixon then repeated an earlier vow: "I have no intention whatever of ever walking away from the job that the people elected me to do."

Later, Nixon drew on other sources of sustenance. At a national prayer breakfast, he suggested: "What all of us need to do, and what this nation needs to do, is to pray in silence and listen to God to find out what he wants us to do." Welcoming a group of pro-Nixon demonstrators outside the White House, the President's daughter, Mrs. Edward Cox, expressed "outrage" at the criticism of her father and added: "Why should he resign? He hasn't done any-

thing wrong." At Tricia's side, Ed Cox declared that Nixon is the victim of "one of the most vicious witch hunts in American history." But in a low-key reply to Nixon's State of the Union message, Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield explained that Watergate inquiries cannot suddenly cease. "Whether it is months or years, there are no judicial shortcuts."

The President's appearance on Capitol Hill was as cheering a night as he has had lately. It may be one of the last such pleasant events in his public life. Watergate has moved far past the point where the President can wish it away with rhetoric or by instructing Ron Ziegler to henceforth take no more questions from the press on Watergate. It is caught up in an unstoppable investigative process, in the courts and in Congress. If it has consumed a year, Nixon's own resistance to disclosure, his dismissal of Jaworski's predecessor Archibald Cox, and his missing or erased White House tapes are major reasons. Nixon's "voluntary" cooperation with Jaworski has actually been a grudging struggle under threat of court action—and Jaworski may still have to seek subpoenas for other long-requested White House evidence.

Neither can Nixon hope to sustain any personally proclaimed restrictions on his cooperation with the Judiciary Committee. The day after his appearance before Congress, the 21 Democrats and 17 Republicans on the committee voted unanimously to seek full subpoena powers from the House to aid its impeachment inquiry—a request certain to be quickly approved. Leading Republicans on the committee have expressed agreement with both Chief Counsel John Doar and Minority Counsel Albert Jenner that such subpoenas, under the Constitution's grant of impeachment authority to the House, cannot be legally refused by the President. He can even be ordered to appear before the committee. His failure to cooperate could, in itself, constitute an impeachable offense.

## Drive to Discredit Dean

The White House-inspired campaign to discredit President Nixon's chief Watergate accuser, former White House Counsel John Dean, continued last week. But the special prosecutor's staff took the unusual step of defending Dean's credibility in a public federal court hearing in Washington.

The major element in the anti-Dean drive has been selective leaks of summaries prepared by the White House of Watergate-related conversations between Dean and President Nixon. After looking at them, Senate Republican Leader Hugh Scott insisted that they exonerate Nixon on some aspects of Watergate, presumably the cover-up of the origins of the wiretap and burglary at Democratic National Headquarters. Scott said that they also provide reasons for charging Dean with perjury in his Senate Watergate hearings testimony. Last week Columnist Jack Anderson printed some excerpts from the White House summary of a March 21, 1973, Nixon-Dean talk. The summary, Anderson reported, supports the President's version of the conversation.

Also last week, Egil Krogh Jr., the head of Nixon's White House plumbers unit who pleaded guilty in the burglary of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, appeared on CBS-TV's *60 Minutes* news program. He claimed that a conversation of his own with Dean on March 20, 1973, casts a shadow on Dean's public testimony. CBS's Mike Wallace interpreted this to mean that Dean had committed perjury, but Krogh would not agree to that term.

The doubts about Dean's credibility seem at least partially based on a misunderstanding of his Senate testimony. Krogh, Scott and Anderson all implied that Dean had claimed that Nixon was fully aware of all aspects of the cover-up before March 21, 1973. On that date, both the President and Dean agree, Dean outlined the conspiracy in detail. By this reasoning, also advanced by the