

# Hill Democrats Vow Work On Some Nixon Proposals

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Congressional Democrats pledged yesterday to take up some of the legislative proposals in President Nixon's "second State of the Union" message, but warned that they will persist in efforts to cut the President's defense budget and to enact social legislation that reflects their own views.

At the same time, Democratic leaders made clear that they believe Congress has done an excellent job so far, that many of the legislative delays are the direct result of presidential failure to transmit legislative proposals early in the year, and that it is impossible so late in the year to give consideration to all 50 of the bills listed by Mr. Nixon in his message.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) met for an hour yesterday with the Democratic chair-



**SEN. MIKE MANSFIELD**  
... meets chairmen

men of all the Senate's legislative committees to assess the status of various proposals both of the President and of leading Democrats. Mansfield said a "must" list of legislation that will have to be taken up before the 1973 adjournment will be

put together today and then coordinated with similar lists of House leaders. Other legislation will simply have to go over until next year.

Mansfield warned that Senate Democrats will again seek to slash the Defense Department budget, despite Mr. Nixon's statement that "we are already at the razor's edge in defense spending" and his threat to "veto any bill that includes cuts which would imperil our national security."

"It's too bad, but we have no sacred cows and I'm sure that we can simplify that budget and still maintain a strong defense posture," said the Democratic leader. "If we just keep going and spiraling the costs, we're going to defense ourselves into bankruptcy."

House Democratic leaders, meanwhile, met with the President to discuss the legislative situation, and the tone on both sides sounded

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conciliatory. At the meeting were Speaker Carl Albert (D-Okla.) and Majority Leader Thomas P. O'Neill (D-Mass.), as well as House GOP leader Gerald R. Ford (R-Mich.), presidential advisers Bryce Harlow and Melvin R. Laird and the White House's lobbying chief on Capitol Hill, William Timmons.

Albert said later, "We are willing to meet the President halfway," and maybe more than halfway on some matters. Albert said the President expressed willingness to compromise, but added that their views on what constitutes compromise might differ. He said they could agree on the main subjects of needed legislation—such as manpower, education and the rest—but get hung up on details.

Albert said Mr. Nixon stressed most the legislation on trade, energy, defense, foreign aid, crime and drugs, pensions and manpower, and housing.

O'Neill said they had a frank give-and-take on what could pass. The President, for example, wants a hous-



REP. CARL ALBERT



REP. THOMAS P. O'NEILL



SEN. HENRY M. JACKSON

The Washington Post

... expect some Nixon bills to pass, but fear trouble on others.

ing bill but Congress hasn't even received his housing message, and O'Neill saw little chance of passage this year.

O'Neill quoted Laird as saying he will be on Capitol Hill often to help try to work out legislation.

A number of Democrats appeared irritated with the

tone of the President's message, saying that while it wasn't ferociously partisan, it did appear to blame Congress unfairly for some White House failings.

Thus, Senate Housing Subcommittee Chairman John Sparkman (D-Ala.) pointed out that while Mr. Nixon mentioned a housing

bill, he hasn't yet sent his proposals to the Hill. The same is true of health insurance, Mansfield said.

Reviewing the status of the President's proposals and other major bills, Senate Interior Committee Chairman Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), following the meeting with Mansfield,

said his own \$20 billion energy research bill, the Alaska pipeline bill and a number of other conservation measures will pass the Senate this year or receive final congressional action, but he said the President's proposal to deregulate natural gas prices won't pass. Jackson contended that his own bill to require mandatory allocations of fuels would do far more to meet the energy crisis.

Sen. Herman Talmadge (D-Ga.), second-ranking Democrat on the Finance Committee, appeared dubious that either a trade bill or tax reform measure can pass the Senate this late in the year, since the House — where the Constitution requires that such measures originate — has yet to act on either.

Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.), speaking of inflation and economic issues, said, "We've given him all the tools to control inflation. There's every indication

that with defense budget cuts," total federal outlays voted by Congress "will be below" the \$268.7 billion proposed by Mr. Nixon for Fiscal 1974.

In the House, Chairman Wayne Hays (D-Ohio) of the Administration Committee said his inclination is to wait for the Senate water-gate committee's recommendations before going ahead with the campaign reform bill, which has already passed the Senate. This probably means no House action until next year.

Democrats responded with a note of sharpness to portions of the President's message charging Congress with inflating federal spending or with seeking unjustified cuts in the defense budget. And a list released by Mansfield showed that one or the other chamber already has taken action on many of the President's proposals.

"The President is on the spot and he is trying to divert attention from some of his own problems," said Senate Democratic whip Robert C. Byrd (D-W. Va.)