

Watergate Is High On Mayors' Agenda

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The Watergate scandal threatens to dominate the 41st annual convention of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which starts today in San Francisco, just as it did the National Governors Conference held earlier this month at Lake Tahoe.

Two strongly worded resolutions touching on Watergate will be considered by the 774 mayors and other city officials attending the conference. The vote on those as well as 54 other resolutions dealing with urban issues will come Wednesday.

"I hope Watergate won't dominate the convention," said John J. Gunther, executive director of the conference. "It has already taken people's attention off the real problems that cities face."

But Gunther, asked why the convention is drawing at least 150 more delegates than last year, replied, "Watergate is obviously a factor. At a time of uncertainty public officials gain some satisfaction in huddling together. I think they're coming to ask one another, 'What's going on?'"

Other factors in the increased attendance, he said, are the Nixon budget cuts, impoundments, and proposals to merge more than 70 specific federal aid programs to states and localities into broad "special revenue sharing" programs of community develop-

ment, health, education, manpower, and law enforcement.

The city officials may not spend two-thirds of their time discussing Watergate, as the governors did, but the two Watergate resolutions are sure to command considerable time and attention.

One, offered by San Francisco Mayor Joseph L. Alioto, says, without mentioning Watergate specifically, that "confidence of the American people in their institutions and offices of national government appears to have been seriously weakened." It also asserts that "the erosion of public support clearly undermines the ability of the government to function effectively."

Insisting that "the many still unresolved critical problems facing American cities demand equal concern," the resolution calls on Mr. Nixon "to do all within his power to restore confidence" in government and to set up a nonpartisan urban advisory council that would report directly to him on urban problems and solutions.

The other resolution, offered by Mayor Norman Y. Mineta of San Jose, Calif., does mention the Watergate affair directly and says that in light of it, "the President himself is concerned about the credibility of the information he has been receiving, or not receiving as the case may be, from his own staff."

Drawing a parallel, the reso-

lution questions the reliability of information Mr. Nixon received about his fiscal 1974 proposed budget. It says "key advisers" told him the budget has \$1 billion more for domestic programs than it did last year although a mayoral analysis showed it has \$4.1 billion less.

It also says the justifications by federal budget makers for "the termination, suspension, or curtailment of many domestic programs are paper thin, highly subjective, and totally unsupported by any backup data."

The resolution urges the President "to reexamine the credibility of the information supplied to him" on the budget. It asks Congress to probe further into the budget process, and suggests that both Congress and the President alter domestic budget priorities "based on accurate data."

Besides the budget, the mayors will be debating such issues as general revenue sharing, the no-strings-attached program of sending \$30 billion in federal aid to states and localities over the next five years, and special revenue sharing, the proposed consolidation of small federal aid programs into large ones.

So far about \$6 billion in general revenue sharing funds has been distributed. Some

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