

Nixon Urges Hill Guest to Take Stand

By Jack Anderson

Over brandy and a cigar aboard the presidential yacht Sequoia, President Nixon appealed to a dozen conservative congressmen the other evening to take a stand on impeachment.

"If you believe I am innocent," he urged, "vote against impeachment in the House. Don't pass the buck to the Senate."

He reportedly fears many congressmen may try to get off the hook by casting a procedural vote for impeachment. They could explain they didn't mean to judge the President but merely wanted to bring the case before the Senate for a decision.

This rationale could produce an overwhelming House vote in favor of impeachment. The psychological impact, he is said to feel, could influence senators to vote to remove him from office.

So as the Sequoia cruised down the rain-swept Potomac, the President asked his conservative House friends to settle the impeachment issue in the House.

He assured them that he has cooperated as far as he could with the House Judiciary Committee, which is inquiring into impeachment. He couldn't release tapes and documents, which might damage U.S. rela-

tions with other nations, he said.

He explained that he had had a number of private conversations with other heads of state. It would seriously violate international protocol, he said, if these conversations should be divulged.

The President's shipboard dinner companions were too polite to ask how these conversations could be compromised by release of the Watergate tapes. Presumably, he didn't discuss his Watergate woes with other world leaders.

The President, obviously cheered by the success of peace negotiations in the Middle East, was in a bantering, buoyant mood throughout the three-hour dinner cruise.

He joked with his guests about running Secretary of State Henry Kissinger for the Senate. Kissinger could be groomed for the seat of retiring Sen. Norris Cotton (R-N.H.), and a bipartisan campaign could be organized to make Kissinger chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the President speculated gleefully.

He suggested that the resourceful Kissinger, as a Senate chairman, might even be able to negotiate peaceful relations between the Senate and the White House.

The President gloated over the defeat of Sen. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), which will remove him as Foreign Relations chairman. As next in line, Sen. John Sparkman (D-Ala.) would have to give up the Senate Banking Committee chairmanship to take over Fulbright's chair.

The President said he hoped Sparkman will choose the Foreign Relations chairmanship, which he has now said he will do. And this would make Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.) the new Senate Banking chairman.

"Those bankers are beside themselves," chortled Mr. Nixon. "The bankers don't want Proxmire."

Speaking seriously, Mr. Nixon told his dinner guests that two days before the Syrian-Israeli truce, "I wouldn't have given a 50-50 chance of an agreement."

He told of the dramatic cables Kissinger had sent from the Middle East.

Turning to his staff chief, Alexander Haig, the President cracked: "If those cables could be published, they would make quite a book, wouldn't they?"

He was optimistic about his forthcoming summit meeting with Leonid Brezhnev in Moscow. The President said he would have more flexibility to negotiate than would Brezhnev. The Soviet leader is far more

subservant to the Politburo, said Mr. Nixon, than most Americans realize.

On the other hand, he said, the Founding Fathers had given the American President more "maneuvering room" than other leaders possess.

Earlier in the evening, Rep. Gillespie Montgomery (D-Miss.) asked Mr. Nixon magnanimously: "Mr. President, what can we do for you?"

The President responded to this offer by urging his conservative guests to support his veto of "irresponsible spending bills." Government spending was spurring inflation, he said, which could become the nation's biggest headache.

He also admonished them not to let the Pentagon sell them a military force superior to that of the Soviets. "All we need is to be equal," said the President. "Don't you guys let the military push you into superiority."

Footnote: The President served chateaubriand, with mushrooms, peas and a spaghetti dish. He also passed out Sequoia matchbooks, which he autographed. This was the second time in two weeks that he has taken conservative congressmen on a dinner cruise as part of his effort to gain support against impeachment.