

YAF Convention Urges Drive to Dump Nixon

By David S. Broder

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HOUSTON, Sept. 4—Overriding their leaders, delegates to the national convention of Young Americans for Freedom today condemned the "failures" of the Nixon administration and called for a conservative "dump-Nixon" drive in next spring's presidential primaries.

The representatives of the 67,000-member conservative youth group stripped from the draft resolution its leaders had prepared a statement that "we do not plan at the moment to encourage formal political opposition to President Nixon in the forthcoming primary."

Mike Connally, the Louisiana YAF leader who led the one-sided floor fight against the more moderate resolution of the leadership, said, "so far as I can see from this convention, the statement that we do not plan to encourage formal opposition to President Nixon is absolutely false."

With several delegates shouting "Dump Nixon," a decisive voice vote killed the temporizing language as well as a paragraph reaffirming "our personal admiration" for Mr. Nixon and "our wholehearted identification with the purposes he has over the years espoused."

Later tonight, the delegates were scheduled to endorse their presidential candidate for 1972. Connally was cheered when he declared, "I think it's safe to say it will not be Richard Nixon."

The delegate's choice seemed likely to be either Vice President Spiro T. Agnew or California Republican Gov. Ronald Reagan. Reagan, who is slated to address the convention's closing session Sunday by telephone, already has repudiated a presidential draft movement launched earlier this year by YAF's national chairman, Ronald Docksai.

Docksai, a graduate student at New York University, was

reelected to the chairmanship today.

The quick, decisive reaction by the delegates today doomed weeks of careful efforts by conservatives in the Nixon administration and the YAF leaders to prevent an open break with the President and the organizations that consider itself the vanguard of the young conservative movement. The President's name drew boos and hisses when it was mentioned on the convention floor today.

Docksai and YAF's executive director, Randall Teague, had been in touch with White House aides on the strategy that was rejected.

Immediately after the vote, Teague said, "I'm a little bit shocked. Clearly the delegates want to consider the political option open. Maybe it means there should be a conservative candidate in New Hampshire, and it certainly shows that anti-Nixon sentiment is stronger than I thought it was."

While YAF by itself obviously lacks the resources to promote a rival presidential candidate, its action is viewed as an effort to prod the adult leaders of the conservative movement to step up their pressure on the Nixon administration.

At a meeting in New York a month ago, a dozen nationally prominent conservatives, including Teague and YAF's founder, columnist William F. Buckley Jr., jointly announced they would "suspend" their support of the administration because of their "misgivings" over its domestic and international policies.

Their statement partially criticized Mr. Nixon's "overtures to Red China" and "his

failure to call public attention to the deteriorated American military position."

The YAF leadership sought to have the convention simply endorse the New York declaration. Buckley and his brother, Sen. James L. Buckley (Cons.-R-N.Y.), urged here that the convention not make an open break with the administration. The same stand was urged in a letter to the delegates from Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), and by Goldwater's former campaign manager, Stephen Shadegg, who was here in Houston.

Michael Campaigne, a YAF board member who presented the leadership's restatement this afternoon, said that resolution would "leave us in a flexible position."

Campaigne sought to disarm the delegates by telling them that he agreed "Richard Nixon is doing to the conservative movement what Dwight Eisenhower did to it in the 1950s."

But the delegates, who have been complaining privately of the President's "betrayal" of conservative causes, rejected any sign of compromise.

Another resolution declared the President's scheduled trip to China is "morally offensive" and a threat to American alliances with free Asian nations.

Another policy statement condemned the President's welfare-reform plan as a "dangerous" step toward "a guaranteed annual income to a swollen welfare constituency."

A third resolution called on the President "to promptly terminate" the wage-price freeze and "restore freedom to the economy."

The YAF delegates also called on Mr. Nixon to suspend further arms negotiations with the Soviets and take prompt steps to "return the United States to superiority in strategic weapons."