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**Nixon Lauded
As Leader
By Goldwater**

By Tim O'Brien
Washington Post Staff Writer
Sen. Barry M. Goldwater (R-Ariz.) said yesterday that President Nixon "is probably the best President we've had in this century" and that Mr. Nixon "can lead and is leading," despite the impact of Watergate.

Goldwater said the President should not resign and that he does not see sufficient evidence to warrant impeachment.

Over the course of recent months, Goldwater had voiced growing dismay at the President's public credibility rating, which, he said on Nov. 1, "has reached an all-time low from which he may not be able to recover."

Goldwater, one of the most influential conservatives in Congress, was among those who urged Operation Candor on the President. At one point, he had said that an appearance before the Senate Watergate committee "may offer the only way out" for Mr. Nixon.

But yesterday Goldwater said, "We have much greater problems in this country and in this world than Watergate, and I think the American people are taking that attitude — let's get these other things solved. And unless there's something more unusual about the President in Watergate than what's come out, let's get off his back."

Goldwater said the Senate Watergate committee is "having a very difficult time

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ironing this thing out-and sorting it out."

Goldwater said he hasn't "heard any direct charges against the President," and that "I know nothing that he has to answer."

"The things that he's answered didn't come out of Watergate. For example, making a buck on real estate in Florida and California — I don't see any connection with that and Watergate. Daniel Ellsberg and having to break into his psychiatrist's office — there's no relationship to Watergate," Goldwater said.

"I don't think he's guilty of anything connected with the Watergate, and I'll hold that feeling until there's more proof than what I've seen," he said in an appearance on the television program "Meet the Press" (NBC, WRC).

Goldwater cited the foreign policy of Mr. Nixon and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger as an example of the ability of the administration to continue governing the affairs of the nation.

Meanwhile, Attorney General William Saxbe said the House Judiciary Committee's impeachment investigation could be delayed indefinitely if President Nixon invokes executive privilege and refuses to turn over disputed tapes and documents.

Saxbe said that the use of executive privilege to thwart an impeachment investigation "is new ground that has never been explored before and I would guess it's finally going to be decided by the Supreme Court of the United States."

Saxbe conceded that a decision by the Judiciary Committee on whether to recommend impeachment could "be dragged out" for a long period if the courts were asked to rule on the executive privilege issue.