

Nixon to 'Fight Like Hell' Against Impeachment Step

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 23 — President Nixon has told Republican Congressmen he will "fight like hell" against moves to impeach him.

Belated reports from a White House meeting yesterday between the President and 18 Republican members of the House picture the President as firm in his refusal to consider resigning from office and committed to fight the House inquiry into his impeachment now under way.

Representative Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, who said the President had authorized release of his quotes, said the President had told the group of his intentions to resist the impeachment inquiry.

"I took notes on what he said," Mr. Frelinghuysen said today, "and he told us: 'There

is a time to be timid. There is a time to be conciliatory. There is a time, even, to fly and there is a time to fight. And I'm going to fight like hell.'"

The statement is the first on the President's determination to fight impeachment that has been directly attributed to him. Other White House officials have said there is a general determination to consider the impeachment inquiry "political" and to resist the inquiry.

Mr. Nixon's determined attitude has suggested to some observers here that he may not be any more cooperative in furnishing the House with information he regards as privileged than he has been with other investigations of the Watergate affair.

Such a position would be in sharp contrast with the one

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he took in the last impeachment inquiry with which he had to deal.

In 1970, Mr. Nixon told a House inquiry into the possible impeachment of Justice William O. Douglas of the Supreme Court that the Administration was "clearly obligated" to cooperate and make information available to an impeachment inquiry.

In a letter written at the time to the House Judiciary Committee, copies of which have been rediscovered recently on Capitol Hill, the President pledged his full cooperation in the proceedings involving Justice Douglas.

'Executive Branch Obligated'

"The power of impeachment is, of course, solely entrusted by the Constitution to the House of Representatives," President Nixon wrote the commitment on May 19, 1970. "However, the executive branch is clearly obligated, both by precedent and by the necessity of the House of Representatives having all of the facts before reaching its decision, to supply relevant information to the legislative branch, as it does in aid of other inquiries being conducted by committees of the Congress, to the extent compatible with the public interest."

As a result of that letter, and the President's later instructions, the committee was given access to hundreds of Federal documents including tax returns, Justice Department files and Central Intelligence Agency reports.

That impeachment effort never reached a vote by the House.

The President's current atti-

tude was of special interest today to members of the House Judiciary Committee. A meeting of the committee's ad hoc, advisory committee on impeachment is set for tomorrow to lay plans for gathering the information on the inquiry into President Nixon's conduct in office.

A major decision facing that committee is how to gain access to White House information that other Watergate-related investigations have gotten primarily by subpoena.

In the face of the President's stated intentions to fight the inquiry the committee may have little choice except to subpoena information and become involved in an extended investigation.