

Demos Angry Over Watergate Stand

Washington

Congressional Democrats reacted angrily last night to President Nixon's call for an end to the Watergate investigation.

They interpreted his remarks on cooperation with the House Judiciary Committee impeachment probe as indicating that he will withhold information when he chooses.

"If the President would not have spent time withholding information from our investigation," said Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. (Dem.-N.C.), chairman of the Senate Watergate committee, "we could have ended it months ago."

Senator Alan Cranston (Dem.-Calif.) said, "In the

first part, he indicated a spirit of cooperation with Congress, which he totally reversed in the later part. He plainly doesn't intend to cooperate with the House Judiciary Committee except on his own terms.

"I noted no new initiatives in the President's speech, only generalities and platitude," said House Speaker Carl Albert (Dem.-Okla.).

Senator Walter F. Mondale (Dem.-Minn.) said, "I was almost offended by his Watergate statement, which I thought was contemptuous of his legal responsibilities to Congress and the House Judiciary Committee and the courts."

Senator Lloyd M. Bentsen (Dem.-Tex.) said, "He very carefully hedged his degree of cooperation with the judiciary committee. . . . He can make the greatest contribution toward an early ending of the Watergate probe by giving the information requested to the committee."

Although Republicans ge-

nerally praised Mr. Nixon's speech, even some of them raised questions about the degree to which Mr. Nixon had pledged cooperation with the House Judiciary Committee. They said they were uncertain when he said he would yield nothing that would impair the presidency whether that meant he would cooperate only selectively.

Representative Henry Smith (Rep.-N.Y.) of the House Judiciary Committee called Mr. Nixon's address "a very gutsy speech. We're glad to hear him say he will cooperate with the judiciary committee. The test is whether he will."

Also praising the speech in general, Representative Larry Hogan (Rep.-Md.), a judiciary member, added that he didn't like the provisions added by the President.

"It depends what he means by cooperate," Senator Charles H. Percy (Rep.-Ill.) said. "He was correctly putting the major emphasis on peace," said Senator Charles McC. Mathias Jr. (Rep.-Md.), but Mathias indicated doubts on the President's cooperation pledge and said, "I think we could all agree that a year of Watergate is too much because the first night of it was too much. But he was talking to the wrong people because the courts now have it."

Other Republican reaction was warmer and less qualified.

"Complete, comprehensive and conciliatory, a constructive challenge to the Congress," said Senate GOP leader Hugh Scott (Rep.-Pa.).

"It was a positive, thoughtful message setting forth sensible goals — goals that are attainable if congress will step up to the challenge," said Senate GOP whip Robert P. Griffin

(Rep.-Mich.).

"The hallmark of the speech was determination. . . . I was tremendously impressed with the enthusiastic response given the President by members of Congress and I feel the people will respond equally enthusiastically," said GOP national chairman George Bush.

Senator Russell B. Long (Dem.-La.) said, "overall I thought it was a good speech. On welfare reform, I am encouraged by what he said and I think we can get together. On Watergate, he left no doubt in my mind that he feels no guilt and he will stay on the job."

Representative John Anderson (Rep.-Ill.), chairman of the house GOP conference, called the speech "conciliatory without being craven. . . given the fact that there may be some difficulties in his pledge of cooperation with the judiciary committee, even yet I think he made it in the spirit of conciliation."

"A constructive speech that outlines a comprehensive program for Congress to work on this year. I was encouraged," said Senator J. Glenn Beall Jr. (Rep.-Md.).

Except for the reaction to the President's Watergate comments, the response to Mr. Nixon's remarks was generally favorable, with members of both parties saying Mr. Nixon had spoken in clear tones, made a good delivery and appeared conciliatory on many issues.

House GOP leader John J. Rhodes of Arizona, called the message "constructive, thoughtful and timely," but Senator George McGovern (Dem.-S.D.) raised the question on the mind of everyone in Washington when he said, "very few Americans share the absolute confidence that the President demonstrated that he will complete his eight years."

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