

Nixon's Program For Self-Defense



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PRESIDENT NIXON'S total legislative-public relations strategy reportedly is now geared to defending himself from impeachment and conviction.

Sources privy to the inner councils say the White House has compiled a list of 34 to 39 hard-core conservative Senators whose votes the President is counting upon to save himself from removal. All he needs are 34 votes to prevent the Senate from throwing him out of office.

The President is partly tailoring his legislative program, say our sources, to appeal to the die-hard Senators. Since they are all strong conservatives; he will take a stand against certain consumer, environmental, and social programs they despise.

Already he has backed away from the Consumer Protection Agency which his consumer adviser, Virginia Knauer, has been pushing. He has also let oil-and-gas Senators know that he is fighting to exempt refineries from the environmental laws and to lift the regulation of natural gas.

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AT THE same time, the President has carefully selected friendly, conservative audiences for his public appearances. As a veteran politician, he knows the trigger lines that will evoke applause. He wants conservative Senators to hear the applause their supporters are giving the President.

He is also using psychological-political warfare, say our sources, in his fight

against impeachment. He knows most politicians are cautious, and some are downright timid. They would rather avoid a confrontation; they almost always prefer to work out an amicable compromise in the backrooms.

This explains the growing clamor from the leaders on Capitol Hill for him to resign. They would like him to go away quietly and, thereby, avoid a nasty impeachment fight.

But the President is throwing down the gauntlet and threatening a bruising battle. Our sources say he is counting on the Capitol Hill crowd, out of normal political caution, to back off.

But the members of Congress have an even greater political urge to be reelected. So in the end, they probably will do what they think the voters wish.

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THE foreign aid program, whose blundering overseas gave its representatives the nickname "Ugly Americans," offered refrigerators to the Eskimos and shipped toothpaste to nations whose people had no toothbrushes.

But last September, the Nixon Administration persuaded Dan Parker, head of the Parker Pen Company, to take charge of foreign aid. Parker impressed Congress with his background and intelligence. Since his takeover, he has begun quietly to straighten out the problem-plagued agency. It is too early yet to pronounce his reforms successful. But increasingly, the Ugly American is becoming known as the Able American.