

# Governors Urge Nixon To Give Data

By David S. Broder  
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Seattle

A bipartisan group of leading governors urged President Nixon yesterday to submit all White House tape recordings and other impeachment evidence the Supreme Court and Congress order him to turn over — or face the consequences.

In a joint interview preceding today's opening of the annual governors conference, four Democratic and two Republican state executives agreed that any refusal on Mr. Nixon's part might cost the President his office.

With one exception — Oregon's maverick Republican Tom McCall — they said that impeachment would leave fewer questions and doubts in the public mind than a Nixon resignation.

McCall, who disclosed that he has been discussing a possible 1976 "third force" presidential movement with such diverse figures as Eugene J. McCarthy and George Romney, argued that impeachment is "a ludicrous procedure" which "will prove nothing at all definitive."

He called impeachment the "least awful" of the "terrible alternatives."

While impeachment questions dominated the questioning of the six governors on NBC's "Meet the Press" yesterday, the state executives are making a deliberate effort to demonstrate during their session here that the state capitals have escaped the taint of Washington's scandals.

For the first time in many years, neither the President nor the vice president is appearing on the conference program, and the chairman and host, Washington Republican Governor Daniel J. Evans, argued yesterday that "in a period of national turmoil, the states and their leaders may very well be

sort of the bedrock of the political system."

Departing from the custom of focusing on the problems in their relationship with the national government, Evans has designed the conference to showcase "the state of the states"—a condition which he said yesterday is characterized by both fiscal prosperity and political stability.

Yesterday, however, the governors let reporters lead them into the Watergate questions and found agreement on the proposition that Mr. Nixon must reverse his stated intention to refuse to comply with any further requests for evidence from Congress or the courts.

Asked if Mr. Nixon should comply with subpoenas or court orders for tapes and other documents, Evans, McCall and the four Democrats on the panel — Wendell Anderson of Minnesota, Jimmy Carter of Georgia,

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Wendell Ford of Kentucky and Daniel Walker of Illinois — gave a unanimous "yes."

Carter, however, added that he did not think the President would release any more evidence, because "I personally think that the President is guilty and I think that the release of evidence will prove it."

Carter, the head of the 1974 Democratic campaign committee, said he believes Mr. Nixon "has made a decision that the best grounds on which to face an impeachment charge is on the failure to release evidence, even if demanded by the Supreme Court or the Senate itself during the impeachment trial."

But the Georgia governor predicted that stand would cost the President the support of "most of the Southern senators who are conservative and who are quite naturally inclined to support Mr. Nixon's policies."

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All the governors but McCall agreed that the impeachment process is preferable to a presidential resignation.

Ford, who is opposing Senator Marlow Cook (Rep-Ky.) in November, said he had originally favored resignation, but switched his stand when many Republicans — including Cook — started calling for the President to step down.

He conceded that there might be a political advantage for Democrats like himself in having Mr. Nixon in office through November, but said the sudden Republican demand for a resignation made people think "that they were trying to hide something, to sweep it under the rug. I think the sentiment of the people is for the constitutional route (of impeachment)."