

If White House Has an Anti-Impeachment Lobby, Its

By PHILIP SHABECOFF
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WASHINGTON, July 7 — If the White House is conducting an anti-impeachment lobby on Capitol Hill, as some critics have asserted, it is doing so with a gossamer touch that seems to be unfelt by many members of Congress.

Several Congressmen, along with other critics, have alleged that President Nixon and his staff are tailoring their legislative tactics and their dealings with individual members of Congress to win favorable votes should impeachment come to the floor of the House or an impeachment trial to the Senate.

The President's legislative approach, these critics assert, is now designed to win favor with conservative members of Congress whose vote could save him from impeachment in the House or conviction in the Senate.

As evidence of impeachment lobbying these critics point to such things as recent invitations to mostly conservative Congressmen to dine aboard the Presidential yacht, as well as firm White House support of the conservative position on such legislation as land use, free legal services to the poor, Federal identification of poultry farmers, welfare reform, consumer affairs and other bills.

Aides Deny It

But high-ranking Presidential aides responsible for legislation—and relations with legislators—flatly deny that there is any anti-impeachment lobbying going on.

And members of Congress interviewed over the last two weeks, including some opponents of the President, could point to no specific example of White House lobbying for their impeachment vote. While several legislators did describe specific actions by the White House as "impeachment politics," they said they could not prove that the President's decision was motivated only by his impeachment problems.

When the House killed a land-use bill earlier last month, its sponsor, Representative Morris Udall, Democrat of Arizona, charged that "impeachment politics" had caused its defeat.

Mr. Udall said that the White House had withdrawn promised support for the bill, which would have given states resources with which to prevent developers from despoiling the land.

"The President is grandstanding for the right wing," he charged at the time the bill was defeated. "He's giving in to them on every major issue. This was straight impeachment politics."

Detects a Pattern

But when asked in a telephone interview for evidence that impeachment politics had caused the demise of the bill, Mr. Udall said that "I cheerfully concede you will never catch Richard Nixon engaged in blatant impeachment lobbying."

However, he said that from his own experience and conversations with fellow Democrats in Congress, he could see a pattern whereby "the Administration will cave in on anything" the conservatives want.

Some supporters of the bill to provide free legal services to the poor see this pattern in the President's threat to veto the measure, a threat they insist can only be intended to curry favor with the conservatives. They noted that the bill was carefully worked out with the White House over the last four years ago and there should

be no legislative reason for a veto.

"The President will be vetoing his own bill if he vetoes this bill," Senator Gaylord Nelson, the Wisconsin Democrat who is one of the chief sponsors of the bill, said to a reporter.

Veto is Forecast

One of Senator Nelson's aides said it was now assured that the President would veto a legal services bill ever if all the White House objections were answered, "for no cogent reason" other than to please the conservatives.

The aide conceded, however, that Mr. Nixon had always opposed these kinds of social programs and could not be accused of taking a new position. He agreed that the veto threat reflected "the hardline Nixon position" but added that it was not a "reasonable" legis-

lative position in view of past Administration willingness to find accommodation with Congress.

The White House is insisting that its legislative tactics reflect only the President's own long-range goals and predilections.

"It was not true that we changed our support for the land-use bill," asserted Kenneth R. Cole, executive director of the President's Domestic Council, during a recent interview.

He said that the Administration believed that the Udall bill provided too strong a role for the Federal Government and so supported a different version introduced by Representative Sam Steiger, Republican of Arizona. "Unfortunately, we didn't get the Steiger bill," Mr. Cole added.

William E. Timmons, assistant to the President in

charge of liaison with Congress, insisted that he and his staff were doing no direct or indirect lobbying on impeachment.

"There is no way to do it even if we wanted to," Mr. Timmons told a visitor. No articles of impeachment have yet been presented by the House Judiciary Committee, he said, and noted that it was possible that none would be. Because members of Congress have not been able to consider the evidence yet, they are in no position to make up their minds, he added.

"If the President called me in today and asked me to get him a head count on impeachment, I'd have to say I am sorry Mr. President, but there is no way in the world I can do it," Mr. Timmons said.

Conservative congressmen who have been invited to spend evenings chatting with Mr.

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Work Isn't Apparent to Many in Congress

Nixon aboard the Presidential yacht Sequoia said when interviewed that the President had not asked for their support on impeachment directly or indirectly.

"If the President has to lobby us, then he'd better quit right now," said Representative Dan H. Kuykendall, Republican of Tennessee, who was a guest aboard the yacht recently.

Mr. Kuykendall, who is known as a supporter of the President, said that "to lose an impeachment vote in that group [of conservative Congressmen aboard the yacht] he would have to have a crime proved against him—nothing else would do it."

"The President said when somebody else brought the subject of Watergate up that he was not guilty of any crime," he recalled. "If that is true, he has the votes of everyone who was on the Sequoia. If that is

not true every one of us would vote against him."

Democratic leaders in Congress were unable to point to any specific cases of impeachment lobbying.

"I suspect something is going on because of the way the Republicans are acting lately," said the House Democratic leader, Thomas P. O'Neill of Massachusetts, through an aide. But he added that he knew of none from personal observation.

Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, the Senate majority leader, said in a telephone interview that, as far as he knew, there was no impeachment lobbying by the White House.

"Maybe they are doing something on the House side, but we are being left alone," he said.

Some members of Congress said the President had been

more accessible since the Watergate and impeachment storm burst about his head. They noted that relations with the White House had generally been more cordial since the departure of the former Presidential aides, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman. Mr. Nixon, they agree, has gone out of his way to mend fences with Congress.

"There has been a public relations effort," said a top aide to a House Republican leader. "But a lot of people down there at the White House can't appreciate the reality of what is going on. They still think P.R. is something that can solve their problems."

"The only thing that matters now is the evidence that comes out of the House Judiciary Committee," he said. "Some people still haven't granted that reality."