

Weicker Raps Nixon

Hartford, Conn.

The GOP is being damaged more by President Nixon's attitude toward the Watergate scandal than it was by the bugging incident, Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (Rep.-Conn.) said yesterday.

Weicker said, "As testimony comes before the committee it's clear it (the Watergate incident) was restricted to a very few persons, persons that had not even engaged in Republican party activity.

"The handling of this matter by the President, and by others, where in fact they're counterattacking the truth ... darn well does puts the Republican party into this thing to a far greater extent than the actual participation" in the original incident, he said.

Weicker, a member of the Senate Watergate committee, was questioned by newsmen about his position that Watergate was not a Republican party activity, but an act of individuals.

"That's a matter of fact," he said. "It's also true that there are those in the handling of this matter and in the approach toward the matter that are doing now what we as a party never did back then, and that is to get the Republican party involved in Watergate.

"In this respect, in a partisan sense, in a Republican sense, I think the President has done, is doing, enormous damage to the Republican party by his attitudes on the handling of Watergate."

Mr. Nixon has declined to give the committee certain access to information it seeks in its probe of the bugging and coverup.

In San Diego, Senator Howard Baker (Dem.-Ten.) said, "No one is out to get the President."

Baker addressed the national convention of the Society of American Florists. The Tennessee senator said he hoped the committee, of which he is vice chairman, "will continue the business of establishing facts and following them wherever they lead us."

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