

Baker's Advice to Nixon

Senator Asks for Disclosure

Washington

Senator Howard Baker (Rep-Tenn.), vice chairman of the Senate Watergate committee, called on President Nixon yesterday to disclose a "matter of grave national importance" that he said would explain some of the covert Watergate activities.

While Baker would not reveal the information he wants disclosed, he said it related to national security and, if released, "would justify or at least explain some of the conduct that appears otherwise unexplainable."

Appearing on "Issues and Answers" on ABC-TV yesterday, he said that, if the information is disclosed, "the odds are probably better that it would be helpful to the President than hurtful."

Baker said he does not intend to reveal the substance of the information but, he said, "I believe the information I possess and the President possesses has sufficient bearing on the conduct of affairs in the White House that it ought to be disclosed."

Baker said the "matter of grave national security" is the same matter brought up by the President in his November 17 question-and-answer session with the Associated Press Managing Editors Association.

At that session, Mr. Nixon said, "National security matters were not matters that should be investigated because there were some very highly sensitive matters involved, not only in the Ellsberg case but also another matter so sensitive that even Ervin and Senator [] decided that I should not delve further."

There is published speculation about the matter



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SENATOR HOWARD BAKER ON INTERVIEW SHOW
A 'matter of grave national importance' could explain covert action

involved a highly placed agent of the Soviet Secret Police operating as an American counterspy, who might have been compromised by continued investigation by the Senate committee and the special prosecutor's office.

Baker said the President's so-called Operation Candor has failed to remove public doubt about his role in Watergate, but he added that, "as of this moment, the odds would favor the president continuing his term."

He said he was "personally disappointed that the White House has apparently changed its tune about making summaries of key Watergate-related tapes available to the public."

Baker said the Senate Watergate committee should reconsider its subpoena of more than 500 Watergate-related White House documents and tapes.

He said the subpoenas, signed by the committee chairman, Senator Sam J.

Ervin Jr., were issued in a manner "out of the ordinary" because he, as vice chairman, had not been consulted in advance by Ervin.

Baker called the number of subpoenas issued and the number of tapes and documents requested "extraordinary."

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