

GOP Dilemma Over Impeachment



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IT LOOKS as if most Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee are taking their cues from the White House as the impeachment drama approaches its climax.

President Nixon, for example, has been maneuvering behind the scenes for weeks to undercut the chief Republican impeachment lawyer, Albert Jenner. Now the GOP minority has put Jenner's subordinate, Sam Garrison, in charge of the Republican staff.

House GOP leader John Rhodes, meeting privately with the Judiciary Committee faithful early last May, told them the President "couldn't stand" Jenner.

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ACCORDING to sources who were present, most Republican committeemen were willing to depose the distinguished Chicago attorney whom they had chosen to handle their side of the impeachment case.

Even Jenner's sponsor and fellow member of the Chicago bar, Representative Robert McClory, assured Rhodes privately that he would support a move to oust Jenner.

The backroom strategists agreed to wait for the best time to act against Jenner. This came after he was quoted in a Texas paper as calling for impeachment.

In his place has stepped the man whom the White House preferred all along — the tough, partisan, 32-year-old former aide to

ex-Vice President Spiro Agnew, Sam Garrison.

He was hired as a hatchetman by the committee's senior Republican and dogged Nixon supporter, Representative Edward Hutchinson (R-Mich.). We reported as early as February 26 that Hutchinson had instructed Garrison "to react negatively to all Democratic proposals and never to initiate any action of his own."

The President's strategy has been to obstruct impeachment and, after it could no longer be delayed, to portray it as a Democratic vendetta against him.

Now, with Garrison stepping forth and leading the political revival, the President's supporters are trying to whip up partisan feelings and make a vote against impeachment a Republican loyalty test.

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THIS HAS dismayed many Republicans who fear the party may be destroyed unless it divorces itself from the President. They believe it would be disastrous for a majority of Republicans to condone his activities by supporting the President.

We have spoken to agonized GOP congressmen who privately believe the President should be impeached, but confess they are under tremendous pressure to vote against it.

Most of the Republicans we interviewed agreed that the case for impeachment is overwhelming. Certainly, enough evidence has been developed to warrant a Senate trial to determine the President's guilt or innocence.