

News Analysis

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Nixon's Strategy: To Do His Job

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WASHINGTON (AP) — President Nixon has decided the best way to campaign for reelection during the next eight months is simply by being President.

So he is spurning "public partisan activities" even as he prepares to announce by mid-January that he is, indeed, seeking a second term in the White House.

The first public step in that candidacy began today, when Nixon's New Hampshire organization announced that the President's name will be on the ballot in the state's Republican presidential preference primary March 7.

NIXON said last night he will make his own announcement by Jan. 14. That presumably will come with the filing of a slate of 14 New Hampshire Republicans, pledged to support his renomination, as candidates for seats at the Republican National Convention.

The President said flatly that he will not campaign, in New Hampshire or in the other presidential primaries, and implied that he doesn't expect two Republican challengers, one on the right and one on the left, to cause him major political problems.

"I have decided that I will engage in no public partisan activities until after the Republican convention," Nixon said in a CBS interview. "The problems of the presidency, the problems of this office in which we sit, in this year 1972, are so great that it will not be possible to take time off for partisan politics."

THE Republican game plan, clearly, is to let the corps of would-be Democratic challengers slug out the active campaign until late summer, while Nixon performs from the best of all stages, the presidency.

Party spokesmen and proxy campaigners certainly will miss no opportunity to draw the contrast, and to depict Nixon as above such political wrangling.

It is a scenario well adapted to Nixon's self-assessment, for the President said that his strong points are not rhetoric, showmanship, the attributes that create glamor, excitement and charisma.

"My strong point, if I have a strong point, is performance," he said.

TALKING of his forthcoming announcement, Nixon recalled that former President Lyndon

B. Johnson decided against seeking re-election, but added: "I do not anticipate that events such as led President Johnson to his decision may affect my decision"

Nixon has said he does not think the war in South Vietnam will be an issue. He said last night the important thing will be whether the American people are convinced the President has done everything he can to end the war and to protect Americans.

Among the events that led Johnson out of the 1968 campaign was a surprise setback in the New Hampshire primary, where then-Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy captured more than 42 per cent of the vote to run a close second to the President, and won 20 of 24 national convention delegates.

In the coming New Hampshire primary, Nixon faces the challenge of two young Republican congressmen, Rep. Paul N. McCloskey Jr. of California on the liberal side, Rep. John M. Ashbrook of Ohio on the conservative flank.