

Congress Ascending

Watergate Seen Restoring Balance Between Executive and Capitol Hill

NYTimes

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON MAY 12 1973

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 11—The White House is slipping and Congress is rising as the balance of power in Washington is being altered perceptibly by the Watergate conspiracy case. For the first time in six years, the House of Representatives went on record yesterday, by a vote of 219 to 188, in opposition to White House policies in Indochina. For the second time in five weeks, the Senate declared yesterday, 66 to 24, that the White House was obligated to adhere to the directions of Congress on government spending.

"Both houses are beginning to see eye to eye on Congressional responsibility," the Senate Democratic leader, Mike Mansfield, said today in an interview.

A senior associate of President Nixon predicted privately today that the White House and the Nixon Cabinet would abandon their attitude of disregard for those on Capitol Hill and become, in the official's words, "more receptive" to Congressional viewpoints.

The change is only beginning to be visible. Much of it is atmospheric. It remains for Congress, long a slumbering giant, to take steps to "even the balance," as Mr. Mansfield put it, but he and others are becoming

field said that the Senate would follow up the House vote on Cambodia probably next week, and that it would move swiftly to consider an outright ban on American involvement in Cambodia.

Before the House vote, the Administration had said that the refusal to allow transfer of \$430-million of defense funds would not, by itself, halt the bombing.

But Mr. Mansfield, who is normally among the most tactful of political leaders, said. "If the will of the Congress and the intention of the Congress — these representatives of the people — are not adhered to, then we will face a true constitutional crisis. One thing this country cannot afford at this time is a constitutional crisis."

'There's Been a Change'

The Senate Democratic leader said that "There's been a change" in the relationship between Congress and the White House. Asked if the Watergate case had been responsible, he smiled, sucked on his pipe and attributed the change to "circumstances."

Others in Congress are less reluctant to state the situation more blandly. Senator J. W. Fulbright of Arkansas, the Democratic chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, told a television interviewer last night that "Watergate is the bursting of the boil" of Presidential power.

Representative John B. Anderson of Illinois, the chairman of the House Republican Conference, said in a telephone interview this afternoon that Watergate had, if anything, made it more difficult for him to vote against the White House on the bombing issue.

Mr. Anderson said that other Republicans had asked him if he was willing to "kick the President when he's down," but that he had replied, "this is not a question of loyalty to the President. It's a question of loyalty to the Constitution."

Some House Republican leaders reportedly implored party members, at a caucus on Wednesday, to line up behind

the White House opposition to the Cambodian amendment so that the vote "won't be taken as lack of confidence in the President over Watergate."

But the issue was cast almost that way by Representative John J. Rhodes of Arizona, the chairman of the House Republican policy committee. In the floor debate over the bombing issue, he said that the six-weeks in the P

policy. But the House denied it.

One Congressional observer saw in the bombing vote a victory for the Democratic majority in Congress. The antibombing majority contained 35 Republicans, 9 more than could be counted on in previous antiwar votes.

But, perhaps more significant, there were 184 Democrats against the White House policy yesterday — 44 more than had normally taken such a stand. They included all but two of the 28 first-term House Democrats and, for the first time, most of the old-line party leaders, including the Speaker of the House, Carl Albert of Oklahoma.

Southerners Shift

Some of the Southern Democrats who had steadfastly endorsed White House policies in Indochina rose to declare that they had had enough.

"I felt an obligation to stand beside American fighting men committed in combat," said one of them, Representative John R. Rarick of Louisiana. "There are no longer any American men in Cambodia. And I for one, shall not vote for any blank check legislation that would risk the possibility of United States men being used in a military build-up for a political chess game."

Much more frequent among opponents of the bombing, including Democrats and Republicans who had been Vietnam war hawks, was a declared desire to reassert Congressional authority over the making of wars.

"This is the once chance, an excellent chance, for Congress

not do it now, we had well disband."

Representative James L. Buckley, Republican of Idaho, called that he had been pleased to attend a "peace with honor" reception at the White House.

But he added that he would see "nothing but tragedy" resulting from continued United States participation in the conflict in Cambodia and thus, "I must part ranks with the Administration on military activities in Southeast Asia for the first time."

Watergate the Factor

The antibombing vote was attributable as much to what members described as a desire to get out of Indochina. But one antiwar lobbyist said after the vote that it would never have been a major issue had it not been for Watergate.

"The sad thing," he said, "is that it came out of Nixon's weakness instead of Congressional strength. But maybe this will be a watershed. Nixon is essentially crippled for three more years."

Representative Anderson said that Mr. Nixon "undoubtedly is in a poorer position" because of the conspiracy case, "and there will be a political price to be paid."

On spending legislation and other domestic issues, the third-ranking House Republican leader said, "The Democrats no doubt will see some merit in taking the President down a peg or two. There will be erosion of Presidential power."

Nixon Hails Mothers Day

WASHINGTON, May 11 (AP) — President Nixon today officially designated this Sunday as Mothers Day. He said in a

Continued on Page 13, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

increasingly persuaded that the legislative branch is "waking up to the realities of life."

One index of the change is the relative silence of the White House. Mr. Nixon held a reception a month ago to honor House and Senate members who voted to sustain two vetoes of spending measures and the President was said, after the first veto victory, to be "doing nip-ups." Yesterday, hours after the House rejected the Administration rationale for the Cambodian bombing, the President's spokesmen said that they had no comment.

In a clear warning to the White House, Senator Mans-