

# GOP Steps Up Pressure on Watergate

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Republican senators and representatives yesterday stepped up their demands that President Nixon allow his aides to testify under oath before a Senate committee investigating a possible conspiracy.

Press conferences on Capitol Hill, statements from their offices and in interviews, GOP officeholders and continued White House pressure on the Watergate case is damaging the Republican Party and Mr. Nixon's image throughout the country.

One of those calling for public testimony by presidential aides was Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), vice chairman of the Senate investigating committee. Baker said he is willing to consider "reasonable safeguards" to protect the doctrine of separation of powers if the aides testify.

Baker, who repeatedly has said he believes eventually those presidential assistants the committee wants to hear will testify in public under oath, said specifically that he is willing to provide protection against public sessions becoming "a long and extended television spectacular." The committee already has voted to allow live televising of its hearings.

Amid denials by both the White House and the committee that arrangements have been made for presidential aides to appear before the committee, at least five other prominent Republicans joined in the demands that President Nixon allow his assistants to tell what they know about the Watergate case.

Sen. William B. Saxbe (R-Ohio) declared at a news conference.

See WATERGATE, A4, Col. 2

## WATERGATE, From A1

ference that he does not believe assertions that presidential aides knew nothing about the bugging conspiracy. "I don't see it," Saxbe said. "The attitude of the White House is that it has no guilt or responsibility, that they don't know anything about it. The facts indicate otherwise."

Rep. John J. Rhodes (R-Ariz.), the conservative chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee, urged President Nixon to "take all steps necessary to clear up confusion and suspicion surrounding the Watergate affair." Rhodes said "the continual mystery" surrounding the bugging incident "is hurting the image of President Nixon and the Republican Party in the eyes of people everywhere." He suggested that a presidential commission, composed of people "not interested in political preferment," should probe the incident.

Another leading conservative, Rep. John B. Anderson (R-Ill.), the chairman of the conference of all House Republicans, said in an interview that John W. Dean III, presidential counsel, should make himself available to the Senate committee. Although agreeing with Rhodes that Re-

publicans feel a deep and growing concern over the Watergate affair, Anderson

said creation of a presidential commission at this point would be viewed as a "diversionary tactic."

Clark MacGregor, who succeeded former Attorney General John N. Mitchell as head of the Committee for the Re-election of the President during the 1972 campaign, said that public anger over the conspiracy "has probably deepened" and that public reaction to the bugging cost Mr. Nixon between 750,000 and 1.5 million votes on election day.

In an interview with the Christian Science Monitor, MacGregor, who succeeded Mitchell in June after the Watergate bugging had been discovered, said he got a "straight, factual, look-me-in-the-eye" report from the committee aides at the time whether they had knowledge of or were involved in the incident.

Sen. George Aiken (R-Vt.) said that if he were a presidential assistant, "I'd be up here (Capitol Hill) this morning pounding on the door, asking them to let me tell them everything I know" because the incident is hurting the Republican Party.

Although initially largely si-

lent on the Watergate affair, Republican senators and congressmen in recent weeks have grown increasingly vociferous in their demands that White House aides tell what they know about the bugging "clear the air."

This has been particularly true since the Senate confirmation hearings last month on Mr. Nixon's nomination of L. Patrick Gray III to be permanent director of the FBI. Gray testified that he turned over the FBI files on the Watergate investigation to Dean and later released information showing that the President's personal attorney and his appointments secretary had arranged for the payment of \$30,000 to \$40,000 in Nixon campaign funds to Donald H. Segretti, an alleged political saboteur.

At Gray's request, Mr. Nixon later withdrew Gray's nomination, but the confirmation hearings had raised new questions about White House involvement in the Watergate affair.

In the days following the Gray hearings, Republicans ranging from liberal Sens. Charles Mc C. Mathias (R-Md.) and Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.) to conservative Sens. John G. Tower (R-Tex.) and Norris Cot-

ton (R-N.H.) have called on the President to allow Dean to testify before the Senate committee. Sen. Robert Packwood (R-Ore.), labeling the Watergate case "the most odious issue" since the Teapot Dome oil scandal of the Harding administration 50 years ago, called for a special panel headed by former Sen. John J. Williams (R-Del.) to investigate the affair.

In general, these Republicans have charged that evidence that presidential aides were involved in the bugging continues to mount, that it appears the White House has attempted to cover up the aides' role in the case and that continued White House silence on the case will seriously damage Republicans throughout the country in the 1974 elections.

Beyond that, many Republicans also are concerned that the Watergate affair and White House reaction to it have already seriously damaged the entire political process in the country.

One of the latest to speak up was Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), Republican presidential candidate in 1964, who said earlier this week the Watergate affair will hurt Republican candidates in 1974 and that because of it the GOP will be unable to elect a

with the committee are continuing, but that "it is incorrect to say any decision or agreement has been reached."

Sen. Sam J. Ervin (D-N.C.), chairman of the committee, also said he knew of no agreement with the White House.

Ziegler told reporters at a White House briefing that "the position (on the aides testifying) that we have stated previously is unchanged."

This was a reference to Ziegler's comments on March 30 that some as yet unspecified procedures might allow presidential aides to supply information to the committee "other than in writing."