

Nixon's Feelings About Watergate



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PERSONAL FRIENDS who have visited President Nixon lately have found him more annoyed than dispirited over the Watergate revelations. What annoys him is the time Watergate has taken from his preparations for the summit meeting with Soviet party leader Leonid Brezhnev.

The President believes he established an understanding with Brezhnev in Moscow last year. They now trust one another enough to proceed with meaningful negotiations, the President suggests.

After Mr. Nixon's return from Iceland, he appeared haggard. But he explains this wasn't from worry over Watergate but from lack of sleep in the land of the midnight sun.

Friends who ask how they can help with the Watergate problem get only an appreciative shrug from the President but no specific suggestions. He will leave it to them, he says, to decide what statements they wish to make in his support.

The mention of John Mitchell or Bob Haldeman causes the President merely to shake his head, as if he doesn't know what to think of his two former close advisers. The President insists he had no advance knowledge of the Watergate break-in or the obstruction of justice. "Stupid," is the kindest word he has for the waterbugging.

He recalls that he thought the best politics last year was to attend to the presidency, that he left the political tactics to "the boys."

But to all who ask, Richard Nixon

makes one thing perfectly clear. He has no intention of resigning.

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CONGRESSIONAL investigators have shown us some of their most recent studies on rising medical costs. The studies are not yet completed, but they already confirm what every sick American knows. Medical costs are way out of line.

Doctors like to blame high hospital costs on all the expensive medical equipment hospitals are now using. The truth is, however, that the biggest item on most hospital bills is the price of the room.

Another major problem is unnecessary surgery. Some surgeons, for example, will take out an appendix at the complaint of a bellyache.

The Nixon Administration, meanwhile is quietly preparing to give the Rand Corporation \$50 million over the next five years to study alternative ways of handling a national health insurance program.

Critics of the study, liberals and conservatives alike, are howling that the study will be a waste of time and money. The study will try to measure how different kinds of health insurance plans affect the customers.

As a result, say the critics, the study will neatly sidestep the question every American really wants to know: why are medical costs going up at the same time that the quality of health care is going down?