

Mr. Nixon's Reappraisal

Critics of the extended investigations of the Water-gate scandals have largely based the case for a speedy end to the proceedings on their fear that the Presidency might be dangerously weakened. A most persuasive reply to such arguments has now been made, however unintentionally, by Mr. Nixon himself as he has publicly retreated from his earlier tough stand on the funding of at least some domestic programs.

The President has decided to sign authorizations for expenditures for health and medical programs and for the support of employment opportunities in depressed areas. He has moreover agreed to abandon his flawed educational revenue-sharing proposals. These actions must be viewed in the light of his previous misconception that Congress merely proposes, while the President alone disposes. A growing realization in and out of Congress that such a doctrine is contrary to good government and in violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution has apparently persuaded Mr. Nixon to acknowledge that he can no longer assume the role of intransigent ruler.

After his earlier rejection of the idea of compromise, laced with threats of impounding Congressional allocations, the President has now characterized his approval of these bills as a "reasonable compromise" in a spirit of "partnership" with Congress.

Mr. Nixon's action comes shortly after his speech last week in Pekin, Illinois, in which he called for "mutual respect between the executive and the legislature" and for the realization that one cannot "have his way all the time." Such a reappraisal of the powers of the Presidency within the system of American government should go a long way toward reassuring those who have been so fearful that a weakened Presidency might paralyze the nation.

Mr. Nixon's new attitude toward Congress tends to point not to governmental paralysis but rather to the liberation from an uncompromising White House and the safeguarding of Constitutional government.