

House Pressing Its Drive For Impeachment Inquiry

Trouble Far From Over

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 23—

President Nixon's decision today to release White House tape recordings has failed to halt House plans for an inquiry into his possible impeachment.

House Democratic leaders said that the inquiry, ordered earlier in the day, would continue as planned.

But the President's decision brought an audible sigh of relief from House Republicans, who earlier sat quietly, almost as if stunned, listening to Democratic demands for either impeachment or a study into whether Mr. Nixon had committed impeachable offenses.

"I think what the President has done will dampen all this," Representative Leslie C. Arends of Illinois, the House minority whip, said late in the day.

But while some Republicans feel that the President may

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have staved off possible impeachment, there were clear signs that Mr. Nixon's troubles with Congress are far from over.

Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee will try tomorrow to call the deposed special Watergate prosecutor, Archibald Cox, before the panel to discuss to what extent Mr. Nixon may have hampered Mr. Cox's investigation before dismissing him last Saturday.

There were calls, too, in both Senate and House, for legislation naming a new independent Watergate prosecutor.

And sponsors of dozens of impeachment resolutions that flooded into the House earlier in the day said that they would continue to press for impeachment of the President.

Representative Jerome R. Waldie, Democrat of California, who along with 27 co-sponsors offered the day's first impeachment resolution, said that he would not withdraw it.

He said that he wanted to find out if the President intended to release other White House documents also sought by Mr. Cox. He added that he would request that the House Judiciary Committee ask Mr. Cox to examine the tapes personally to determine if they were the ones sought.

"I don't think that this make-up, this cosmetic that the President has applied to this case will persuade many people," Mr. Waldie said.

An aide to Representative Peter W. Rodino, Democrat of New Jersey, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, said that the panel's inquiry into possible impeachment would continue as planned.

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House Democratic leaders, meeting earlier in the day, had agreed unanimously to have the Judiciary Committee make the study. This represented a compromise between those in Congress wanting no action and those calling for immediate impeachment proceedings.

House Republican leaders, faced with the clear evidence that some action would be taken by the Democratic-controlled House, met just before noon and endorsed the proposed inquiry, while at the same time defending Mr. Nixon.

Some indication of the seriousness of the impeachment drive may have been transmitted to the President by one of his aides, Bryce N. Harlow, who attended the Republican leadership meeting before noon.

"We told him things were tough," Representative Barber B. Conable Jr. of upstate New York, said later.

When the House convened at noon, it was obvious, in the words of Mr. Conable, that things were tough indeed, as Democrats of varying political views marched to the well of the House to call for impeachment or studies of impeachment.

"It's as if the dam has broken," Representative Clarence D. Long, Democrat of Maryland, observed.

The usually unruly chamber was hushed as members listened attentively to their colleagues. Outside the jammed galleries, long lines of tourists were clamoring to get in.

But the one phrase that House leaders had feared might No one, not even the most avid of those calling for impeachment, demanded immediate action by uttering the words "I impeach the President."

Had anyone done so, the issue would have reached a vote at some point in the day, either by a motion to refer the impeachment question to a committee for consideration there, or by a motion to table it, thus killing it.

Representative Bella S. Abzug, Democrat of Manhattan, a sponsor of several of the impeachment resolutions, said later, "We knew we didn't have the votes to impeach today. We need time. To have forced the issue would have been to defeat ourselves."