

NIXON IS BACKED BY BUSINESSMEN

Top Officers Say He Should
Not Resign, a Sampling
by Times Indicates

By VARTANIG G. VARTAN

A sampling of top business executives indicates they do not think President Nixon should resign, nor do they believe that Congress should begin impeachment proceedings.

Replying yesterday to a telegraphic survey by The New York Times were 38 presidents and board chairmen of the nation's leading corporations. Most said they had voted for Mr. Nixon in the 1972 election.

The executives, by a 3-to-2 margin, agreed that Archibald Cox should have been discharged as the special Watergate prosecutor.

Six corporate leaders replied affirmatively and 32 negatively to the survey's lead question: "Do you think President Nixon should resign?"

On the subject of impeachment, three said Congress should start such proceedings, while 33 said they opposed such action. Those participating in the survey did not reply

to every question. The House Judiciary Committee is making inquiries into whether there is reason to consider impeachment proceedings.

Role of Recent Actions

Twenty-one business leaders said they thought President Nixon's ability to govern had been seriously affected by recent developments. Thirteen did not think so.

Mr. Cox was dismissed one week ago as the Watergate prosecutor. Control over the Government's investigation then was placed in the hands of Henry E. Petersen, who heads the Justice Department's Criminal division.

Fifteen businessmen replying to the survey said they believed a special prosecutor's office should be established independent of the Justice Department. Answers were almost evenly divided on this point. Eighteen corporate leaders said they did not think such an office should be set up, while several withheld their views.

The telegrams were sent to 150 chief executives of major corporations. A number of those not replying were out of the country.

Watergate Consequences

Businessmen also were asked: "What have been or are likely to be the business or economic consequences of the Watergate affair and subsequent developments as things stand now?"

Some replies from the six leaders who think Mr. Nixon should resign—offered on an anonymous basis—included the following:

"Our country is drifting without effective leadership and our friends and enemies in the world know it."

"Domestic business matters have been badly neglected and, having just returned from Europe, I can say that our prestige abroad is at an all-time low due to the Watergate affair and subsequent developments."

"I believe that the persisting crisis in Washington explains why the economic boom of 1973 has not been experienced psychologically as a boom at all."