

Nixon's latest strategy:

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WASHINGTON — Out of the night that covers him, President Nixon has sent word that he means to carry on and not quit.

He's said it before, but this time, with his back up against the wall, Nixon and his associates have developed a new strategy to save his presidency.

It's a strategy of negotiation — not confrontation, to borrow a favorite Nixon phrase from earlier, happier days. Instead of counter-attacking, the President is now trying compromise and conciliation.

The latest in Nixon's many Watergate game plans may be, like its predecessors, too little and too late. Growing Congressional and Republican sentiment to impeach him or persuade him to resign in favor of Gerald Ford has perhaps already passed the point of no return.

Nevertheless, Nixon made it clear last week that he is following his mother's advice: "Richard, don't you ever give up."

The switch in tactics was apparently decided on last weekend at Key Biscayne.

The chastened behavior of the President and his men last week differed noticeably from their previous aggressiveness.

For the first time, they are openly acknowledging that they are in deep, deep trouble.

They are confessing their own mistakes and shortcoming more frankly than before.

They are indicating that the President will humble himself and surrender his secrets to an extent he has so far refused to do.

They are promising to "clarify" and "explain" and "cooperate" — as the price of survival.

Nixon himself admitted, at the end of his TV address on energy Wednesday night, that "great numbers of Americans have had doubts raised as to the integrity of the President of the United States."

Instead of roasting those who raised the doubts, as he did two weeks ago, he pledged to do everything he could to remove the doubts and to show himself worthy of the public's trust.

As a first step, Nixon spent two hours

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with Republican Congressional leaders Friday and pledged full cooperation with the Watergate investigation.

He sat patiently and listened while the lawmakers lectured him on ways to convince the public of his integrity — notably by making available all the tapes and documents that the investigators require.

The Congressmen, who have complained bitterly that the President refuses to take their advice, also extracted a promise that he would consult them frequently from now on out.

The President plans a similar confidence raising session with top Republican party leaders from around the nation in Washington tomorrow.

And his lawyers are negotiating terms for a "summit conference" between the President and the Senate Watergate Committee sometime soon.

Meanwhile, the normally haughty White House Press Secretary, Ronald Ziegler, has apparently taken lessons in humility.

He conceded "sloppiness" on the part of the White House staff (but not the Presi-

dent.) He admitted that previous White House statements "have not always been complete and not always been, as events unfold in some cases, factual."

"We all recognize that there is a question of credibility," Ziegler said. For example, he noted, "the impressions clearly in the country was that there was some tampering with the tapes," but insisted the impression was false.

In the weeks and months ahead, Ziegler promised, the White House is going to "compile information on all these charges that have come in such a rush."

The information, he said, will be communicated to Congress and to the public "perhaps more effectively than we have before."

This seemed to imply that another Watergate "white paper" is in the making. An earlier document issued on May 22 was supposed to lay the scandal to rest, but didn't.

Ziegler also hinted that the White House may make additional tapes and memos available to Judge John Sirica and Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski.