

Urges Full Disclosure

By Lou Cannon

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A prestigious cross-section of Republican leaders met with President Nixon yesterday and then unanimously passed a resolution favoring "full disclosure of all facts arising from the so-called Watergate affair."

The GOP officeholders and officials, known as the Republican Coordinating Committee, praised the President for saying he would make this full disclosure. But several individual members of the group expressed concern that Mr. Nixon would face serious difficulties in overcoming a personal lack of credibility.

"I just hope he and the White House understand the lack of trust there is in this country—which is a frightening situation now," said Gov. Francis Sargent of Massachusetts.

Sen. William Brock of Tennessee, chairman of the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee, said he was "delighted" that Mr. Nixon would make information about his June 20, 1972, conversation with then-Attorney General John N. Mitchell and his April 15, 1973, conversation with then-White House counsel John W. Dean III available to U.S. District Judge John Sirica.

But Brock, asked whether Mr. Nixon was "out of the woods," replied: "By no means."

Instead, said Brock, the President had "opened the door for a resolution of the problem." Another senator who met with the President, Minority Leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, said he understood that compliance

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with the court order was the prelude to Mr. Nixon ultimately making the contents of his Watergate tape recordings available to the public.

"It is my strong hope and desire and belief that the tapes will be made available," Scott said.

The meeting with the Republican Coordinating Committee was the first of a series that Mr. Nixon is holding this week in an effort to explain his new "full disclosure" policy about Watergate and related matters.

He met last night at the White House with seven southern Democratic senators and will meet with Senate Republicans in three alphabetically arranged groups beginning this afternoon. Mr. Nixon will meet with House Republicans in three breakfast sessions starting Wednesday.

The Republican Coordinating Committee that the President saw yesterday is a group of GOP senators, congressmen, governors and party officials formed two months ago by Republican National Committee Chairman George Bush. It is patterned after a party organization that posed alternative policies to those of the Johnson administration from 1965 through 1968.

While the Republican Coordinating Committee as conceived by Bush is attempting to avoid any open break with the President, it promptly committed itself to a course yesterday that would place it in opposition to Mr. Nixon if he decides to withhold Watergate information from the public.

The committee met be-



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Vice President-designate Ford, left, GOP Chairman Bush and Sen. Scott after session.

hind closed doors and one member described the discussion as "very frank and at times quite critical of the President's past actions on Watergate."

This was hinted at publicly by Sargent, who met

with reporters after the meeting.

"I indicated that we shouldn't have some sort of pabulum resolution that will blindly ignore the problems we have," said Sargent.

The three governors who

are members of the coordinating committee appeared to be the most outspoken of the group.

Gov. Robert D. Ray of Iowa agreed with Sargent and said of Mr. Nixon's "full disclosure" decision:

"I think that most of us wish it happened a long time ago."

Ray said that the American people "want to know and deserve to know what happened at Watergate and after Watergate" and that the President had the responsibility to give them the answers.

"He has to do some of these things himself," Ray told reporters. "We can't give you the answers because we don't know."

Participants in the meeting said the President met with them for an hour and a half over breakfast in the White House. He talked for more than 40 minutes, explaining his intention to "go on the offensive" and take his case to the American people.

One of the Republicans who met with the President quoted him as saying that "public officials have no defense against anything said against them" because of the need to prove malice under the Supreme Court decision in a case involving The New York Times.

He further quoted Mr. Nixon as saying:

"The integrity of this President involves me and my family, but the integrity of the presidency involves everyone in the country. Since John Adams lived in this house, every President has striven to maintain that integrity, and I have maintained it.

"... There is not a single alteration of my notes and the tapes, and the evidence will all be presented" to Judge Sirica and the country when Sirica removes the barriers to doing so."