

# Senators, Nixon Talk Watergate

## Washington

President Nixon met for more than two hours last night with 15 Republican senators and apparently persuaded most of them that he intended to tell everything that he knows about Watergate and allied scandals.

The comments of the senators indicated that the meeting — part of a series designed to help bolster presidential credibility — had answered relatively few specific questions, and thus had fallen somewhat short of the goal stated by some White House officials: "Clearing the air" with the Congress.

Instead, according to the participants' accounts, Mr. Nixon devoted himself to convincing them that he would explain his actions in full and soliciting their advice on when and how he should seek to do so.

### COMMENTS

"It was more comments than questions," said Senator William E. Brock of Tennessee. "The emphasis was primarily on the more fundamental question of how do we get this information to the courts, the Congress and especially the American people."

The Senate minority leader, Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, added: "Everyone in the room — everyone — agreed on the need for full disclosure."

Only a few hours before

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the meeting, the Senate Watergate committee voted to ask Mr. Nixon for a private meeting, the transcript of which would be made public at once. The President told his visitors at the White House last night that he had not decided whether to agree.

at a Capitol Hill  
or Senator Wallace  
Bartlett (Rep-Utah) —  
in the Nixons also at-  
tended — a number of the  
senators who had been at  
the White House emphasized  
the President's seriousness  
of purpose.

Senator Dewey Bartlett of Oklahoma said, for instance, that Mr. Nixon had promised full reports on the International Telephone and Telegraph case, on the dairy-price case and on his property acquisitions. Senator Pete V. Domenici of New Mexico remarked that he left the meeting convinced

that the President was "not going to stand on evidentiary technicalities."

Domenici pressed Mr. Nixon for verification of reports earlier in the day about the tape recording of a conversation between the President and John W. Dean III, the ousted White House counsel on March 21.

Republican congressional sources had quoted Alexander M. Haig, the White House chief of staff, as stating that Mr. Nixon could be heard on the tape exclaiming, "Oh, my God!" when Dean told him of the cover-up — thereby buttressing Mr. Nixon's frequent assertions that he had not previously known of it.

The President reportedly confirmed Haig's account. Talking to reporters through the window of his

car before leaving the meeting, Senator Howard H. Baker of Tennessee, the ranking Republican member of the Senate Watergate committee, indicated that questions had not been erased from his mind.

"I don't really think we got that far into the factual situation," he said.

Senator Edward W. Brooke of Massachusetts reported that he had repeated to Mr. Nixon his view that he should resign. He described Mr. Nixon's response as "very gracious." The President said, according to Brooke, that resignation "would be the easy way out and he was not going to take it."

Brooke also said that another senator, whom he did not name, had suggested to Mr. Nixon that he "volun-

teer to undergo an impeachment inquiry to clear the air," but that the President rejected that idea as well.

Senator James L. Buckley, Republican of New York, gave the most upbeat account of the meeting. Buckley described the session as "extremely useful, extremely constructive, very much a step in the right direction."

But even he did not venture to suggest, as have some White House aides in recent days, that the meeting cleared up all the doubts surrounding Mr. Nixon's role in Watergate and related activities.

The Senate Watergate committee vote to seek a White House conference with Mr. Nixon from which others would be excluded was 5 to 1, with Edward J. Gurney (Rep-Fla.) the sole dissenter.

The proposal, drawn up by Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (Rep-Conn.), would not require that the President testify under oath. But a transcript of the meeting with the entire committee would be made and would be released to the public "immediately."

Gurney said that it would be "to the benefit of the committee to work out other ways to see the president." Gurney was among those who went to the White House tonight.

But Weickers and the Democrats on the committee said publicly that they would refuse to go to the White House as part of a larger group. The Connecticut senator said that "if we go as individuals, it detracts from our (the committee's) mandate."

Last night's gathering at the White House was the third and most important. There will be at least six by the end of the week, the White House says is Mr. Nixon's latest campaign to restore confidence in himself and in his administration.

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