

# president

## Nixon Goes on Offensive

ON THE anniversary of his landslide reelection, which President Nixon had told supporters "may be the greatest victory in American political history," Mr. Nixon faced not one but three major crises.

Even to a man who admittedly got tougher the tougher the going got, President Nixon was confronted by more than enough trouble in the Middle East crisis, which appeared under control; the energy crisis, just getting into full flower; and the Watergate crisis, which had become increasingly a threat to the Presidency.

He had set efforts to deal with the energy crisis in motion November 7 (see page 7) and hinted then that he would next confront the Watergate troubles. "As a result of the deplorable Watergate matter, great numbers of Americans have had doubts raised as to the integrity of the President of the United States," Mr. Nixon had said at the end of the energy speech.

### A Counterattack

Two days later he began a counterattack on those calling for his resignation or impeachment. He summoned seven top Republican Senators and Representatives to the White House and listened to two hours of tough talk about what he had to do to regain not only the confidence of the country but of his own party.

Representative John Anderson (Rep.-Ill.) emerged from the White House conference to say, "The President was absolute and complete in his assurance that he is going to cooperate with the courts and the special prosecutor. I feel a great deal more confident."

How vigorously the President planned to move to restore confidence became clear on Monday. He met with the 28-member Republican Coordinating Committee, only recently revived in an effort to divorce the Republican party from the Administration and Watergate in hopes of surviving the 1974 congressional elections.

That was not an academic move. The latest poll by Daniel Yankelovich for Time magazine showed only 49 per cent of those polled wanted the President to continue in office — in August the figure was 60 per cent.

The latest Gallup Poll indicated that a large number of Republican Congressmen and Senators would lose their seats unless they divorced themselves from the Administration's alleged taint.

Thus the President began

a series of breakfasts to meet with all 234 Republican members of Congress; talked to some Democrats as well — first to seven Southern Senators who normally support his programs and who have refused to join cries for his resignation or impeachment.

### Cautious Attitude

But Republicans emerging from the first of the Watergate talk sessions were cautious in their enthusiasm. The 28-member committee voted a resolution saying: "We favor full disclosure of all facts arising from the so-called Watergate affair. We welcome the statement by the President to us that this will be done . . ."

Ronald Ziegler, the White House communications chief, said that the President had ordered files of all allegations against him, his aides, family and friends be compiled along with information to refute them.

Thus the President was expected soon to present another "White Paper" (more



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extensive than that of May 22, which the President then had hoped would settle Watergate: "once and for all") that would deal not only with the Watergate matter but with charges that:

- The President had a \$1 million private investment portfolio managed by his friend Charles Bebe Rebozo.

- The International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. got a favorable ruling on an antitrust case in return for a large contribution to the Republican party.

- Milk producers made \$2 million in contributions and received a raise in the milk subsidy.

- The President's daughter, Tricia Nixon Cox, took illegal advantage of tax laws in a Florida land deal.

- The financing of the President's homes in Key

Biscayne and San Clemente was improper.

- The President filed improper tax returns by claiming questionable deductions.

### The Tape Problem

An immediate move was made to resolve the tape problem which had taken up ten days of hearings before U.S. District Judge John Sirica in Washington, D.C.

The missing or untaped portions of the President's April 15, 1973 conversation with John Dean III and the telephone call from former campaign chief John Mitchell on June 20, 1972, had been completely muddled.

The President's lawyers contended they had not been taped for mechanical reasons. The records of who listened to what tapes and when were almost impossible to unscramble.

To remedy this, last week the President offered the

**'I stepped off  
into a  
cesspool'**

dictation belts of the summary he made following the two conversations. But no sooner was he ready to deliver the belts than it turned out those, too, were nonexistent.

The President quickly offered his own handwritten notes of the Dean conversation, also similar notes of April 16 along with the original tape.

Rose Mary Woods, the President's secretary, testified that the tapes were very difficult to understand because of many extraneous noises—like Mr. Nixon putting his feet on the desk.

Judge Sirica without comment prepared to accept whatever was presented. Then he and the White House lawyers agreed on the technical handling of the tapes and documents — technical experts would examine the tapes to see if they had been tampered with, copies would be made, they would be analysed and indexed.

But whether the President's counteroffensive would carry the day was not certain. These other Watergate matters were taking place:

- U.S. District Judge Gerhard Gesell in Washington ruled that President Nixon's firing of special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox was illegal, but the deci-



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ANDERSON

sion did not order Cox reinstated.

- AFL-CIO President George Meany asked the organization's 13.5 million members to campaign for the impeachment of President Nixon immediately. "Until Richard Nixon is removed from office, we will not be able to get Watergate behind us," he said.

- Judge Sirica sentenced six of the seven men convicted for the Watergate break-in. Sentences ranged from E. Howard Hunt's 2½-8 years to Virgilio Gonzalez's 1-to-4 years.

- Matthew Clark Jr., purchasing director for American Ship Building Co's Amship Division, said that the company gave him a \$5000 bonus check that after deductions amounted to \$3700. He was ordered to contribute \$3000 as a personal gift to the Committee for Re-election of the President and \$700 to other campaigns. He said it was actually an illegal corporate contribution.

#### Guilty Pleas

- Gulf Oil Company pleaded guilty to giving \$100,000 to the re-election campaign of President Nixon — plus \$15,000 to Representative Wilbur Mills (Dem.-Ark.) and \$10,000 to Senator Henry Jackson (Dem.-Wash.) in their bids for the Democratic presidential nomination.

- Ashland Oil admitted in Washington, D.C., court that it gave \$100,000 illegally to the re-election campaign.

- Braniff Airways and board chairman Harding Lawrence pleaded guilty to making an illegal corporate contribution of \$40,000 to President Nixon's re-election and were fined \$5000 and \$1000 respectively.

- Donald Segretti, convicted of "dirty tricks" in Florida, drove to the minimum security Federal prison at Lompoc Calif., in his white Mercedes Benz sports car, then entered the facility to begin serving his six-months sentence. "I got out of the Army and instead of stepping off on the right foot," he told reporters, "I stepped off into a cesspool."

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