

WATERGATE

SF Examiner

DEC 2 1973

Page 12 Section A ☆☆☆ S. F. Sunday Examiner & Chronicle, December 2, 1973

Impeachment possible in January

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Some congressional Republicans acknowledge that President Nixon is operating against a late-January deadline in his campaign to lift the Watergate cloud from his administration.

If he fails by the time the next session of Congress begins, about Jan. 21, a serious impeachment move could

come, they say.

"I think that's a valid assessment," said Sen. John G. Tower, (Rep-Tex.) chairman of the GOP policy Committee and a strong Nixon backer.

However, Tower expressed confidence that "substantive supportive evidence" will be released by the end of the year, including transcripts of some of

the Watergate tapes.

"I believe these will vindicate the President," he said.

Tower is one of a number of senior Republicans in both the House and Senate who say the 18-minute gap in a key Watergate tape has severely damaged Nixon's three-week-old "Operation Candor."

"I think it started out very well but I think the gap in

the tapes has slowed the momentum," said Rep. John J. Rhodes, (R-Ariz.), expected to be elected shortly as the new House Republican leader.

"It's two steps forward and one step backward," said Senate GOP Whip Robert P. Griffin of Michigan. "He still has a long way to go."

However, Griffin, and Rhodes disagreed there is any kind of deadline by

which the President has to clear himself or face a real danger of impeachment.

"I don't think he has got any time limit at all," Rhodes said.

Griffin said he would not want to put a deadline on Nixon's efforts, saying the matter is up to the House.

A Senate GOP liberal said "time is growing short" for the President, however. "He may really be in trouble unless he does something to bring up his rating in the polls by mid-January."

Another Republican, quoted by his aide, said visits home during the recess could result in "a changed attitude" toward Nixon among many House Republicans who have so far balked at impeachment.

However, Sen. James L. Buckley, (R-N.Y.) said he doesn't think Nixon's grace period is even that long.

"If he doesn't do it right away," he said of presidential disclosure, "any allegation will continue to receive a willing reception." More important than satisfying Congress or the courts, he said, is "that the people be satisfied."