

Judge Hopes Nixon Won't Call on Him

Washington

Illinois Appeals Court Judge John J. Sullivan said last night he is resisting a White House request that he quit the bench to head a legal team to defend President Nixon in impeachment proceedings if necessary.

"I have not turned it down," Sullivan said, "but it will be almost impossible to accept unless it is made in such terms that I can't refuse."

He added; "I hope the offer won't be made."

Sullivan, 55, a trial lawyer who served with Mr. Nixon in the Pacific during World War II, said he is at the limit of his ability to help the President without resigning from the Illinois Court of Appeals, to which he was named only seven months ago.

The judge has spend a week in Washington helping organize the President's legal staff.

Any further effort on Mr. Nixon's behalf would involve him in the practice of law, which the Illinois Constitution prevents judges from doing, he said. So far, he added, he has managed to perform only the "administrative" tasks connected with assembling lawyers to relieve beleaguered White House counsel.

Sullivan said White House chief of staff Alexander Haig had given him to understand that future work would include coordinating the response to impeachment activity in the House of Representatives.

Based on a 15-minute conversation with Mr. Nixon and talk with his aides over the past three or four weeks, Sullivan said, "The President has trust in me. That's what is needed more than anything else."

Sullivan said he did not know whether the President lacked confidence in any lawyers who had assisted him recently.

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