

SF Chronicle Watergate Blamed For U.S. Crises

Washington

The president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors declared yesterday that the Watergate scandals have crippled the federal government's effectiveness.

The result, said Mayor Roy B. Martin Jr., has been national and urban crises, including the energy shortage.

Martin, mayor of Norfolk, Va. and a 1972 leader of the Mayors for Nixon organization, added, however, that he thinks the trial and impeachment of President Nixon would be "disastrous for the country."

He addressed the eighth annual Congress-City conference of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities, which opened here yesterday.

Also attending the conference was San Francisco Mayor Joseph L. Alioto, who told delegates there is "a silver lining" in Watergate because it is forcing the Nixon administration "closer to the people."

Alioto said he saw in this situation a hope for springing loose more federal money for the cities.

He urged the 350 mayors and city councilmen present to "pound away on your representatives" to see that \$280 million in housing and redevelopment funds impounded by the President is released.

Alioto also called for \$2.8 billion in interim financing for housing and community development pending passage of the Better Communities Act by Congress.

Martin's remarks were the first major complaint to

the mayors' group about the Watergate paralysis, although governors have been making the same charge for a year.

"During the past year," he said, "we have been a nation distracted from effective government by the tragedy of Watergate."

At a conference luncheon following Martin's speech, White House domestic adviser Mr. Kenneth Cole said Nixon would survive Watergate.

In an interview later, Martin said he was not attacking either side in the Watergate controversy.

"I'm just saying to the President and the Congress to move ahead with some legislation. While the great debate is raging in Washington, urban America is suffering," he said.

Our Correspondent