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Baker Urges Nixon to Yield Tapes

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The ranking Republican on the Senate Watergate committee, Senator Howard Baker of Tennessee, urged President Nixon yesterday to turn all "relevant" tapes and documents over to the House Judiciary committee.

Interviewed on the CBS program, "Face the Nation," Baker said that the House committee, which is deliberating the possible impeachment of the President, ought to honor "whatever reasonable request the President makes, such as the presence of counsel in the principal deliberations and investigation of the committee."

Baker also said that the President should make available to the public the tape of his controversial conversation of March 21 with John Dean III his former counsel.

Baker asserted that the impeachment process, which he described as "that magnificent confrontation" between the President and the Congress, should not be tried on a "narrow legalism" such as whether the President had the right to withhold material.

He said that the country and the future of the presidency "would be better served by a forthcoming spirit and supplying voluntarily whatever . . . is decently relevant or arguably relevant."

Mr. Nixon has refused to turn over additional tapes and documents requested both by the Judiciary committee and the Special Watergate Prosecutor's office,

citing the doctrine of executive privilege.

Yesterday, Baker declared that "the country doesn't want a large-scale production and a long-winded argument on what the documents are . . . they want the tapes, they want to hear."

Both the President and the Congress, he said, "would disserve their constituency" if the impeachment process bogged down on narrow le-

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galisms such as the right of access to the tapes.

Baker specifically recommended that the President make available to the public the tape of his conversation of March 21, 1973, with Dean. This is the controversial conversation involving

possible "hush money" paid to the original Watergate burglars.

Last August 15, Mr. Nixon said in a news conference that he had discussed only payments for legal assistance to the Watergate defendants. Then, at a news conference on March 6, the President said that Dean

had told him of demands for "hush money" during that conversation. A week later he amended his statement and said that Dean had only "alleged" demands for hush money.

Baker said yesterday that the whole country should be allowed to hear the March 21 tape recordings.

Finally, Baker disputed Mr. Nixon's assertion that one year of Watergate is enough and that the country is "wallowing" in the Watergate scandal. "I've always felt," he said, "that once the issue was joined, we had to follow it to its conclusion, and I regret that it's taken so long, but it has."

New York Times