

BAKER BIDS NIXON GIVE HOUSE PANEL 'RELEVANT' TAPES

Also Calls on Committee to Honor Any 'Reasonable Request' by President

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URGES VOLUNTARY ACTS
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Senator Says Impeachment Process Should Eschew 'Narrow Legalisms'

By PHILIP SHABECOFF

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WASHINGTON, March 24 — The ranking Republican on the Senate Watergate committee, Senator Howard H. Baker of Tennessee, urged President Nixon today to turn over all "relevant" tapes and documents over to the House Judiciary Committee.

Interviewed on the Columbia Broadcasting System's television program "Face the Nation," Senator Baker also 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.

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

Asks Voluntary Action

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."

President Nixon has thus far refused to turn over additional tapes and documents requested by both the Judiciary Committee and the special Watergate prosecutor's office, citing the doctrine of executive privilege as the basis of this refusal. Mr. Nixon said the office of the Presidency would be severely

damaged if he allowed these organizations to engage in "fishing expeditions" in the White House.

'They Want to Hear'

Yesterday, the White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, denied published reports that the White House was prepared to turn over 42 additional tape recordings sought by the House committee.

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

Both the President and Congress, he said, "would disserve their constituency" if the im-

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peachment process bogged down on narrow legalisms such as the right of access to the tapes.

Mr. Baker specifically recommended that the President make available to the public the tape of his conversation of March 21, 1973, with his former counsel, John W. Dean 3d. This is the conversation involving possible hush money paid to the original Watergate burglars.

Last Aug. 15, Mr. Nixon said at a news conference that he had discussed only payment for legal assistance to the Watergate defendants. Then, at a news conference on March 6, he said that Mr. Dean had told him of demands for hush money

during that conversation. A week later, he amended his statement and said that Mr. Dean had only "allegedly" demanded hush money.

Senator Baker said that the only condition should be allowing the public to hear the March 21 conversation. The country as a whole, he said, is the sovereign that eventually will make a permanent judgment on the President's case.

Finally Mr. Baker disputed President Nixon's assertion that one year of Watergate was enough and that the country is "swallowing" 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."

Senator Baker declined to discuss the contents of a report he prepared for the Senate Watergate committee on possible involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency in the Watergate

cover-up. He did remark, however, that he had "prepared an extensive report which covers much materials" and had submitted it to the committee.

"I think that in itself indicates that it is not a one-line report saying we found no involvement with the C.I.A." he said.

The House Judiciary Committee, meanwhile, will get a secret grand jury report bearing on President Nixon's conduct in the Watergate scandal unless the issue is appealed to the Supreme Court by 5 P.M. tomorrow.

The deadline was fixed by the United States Court of Appeals on Thursday in upholding J. Sirica's decision Monday to send the report to the committee. Lawyers for seven Watergate defendants challenged the Sirica decision while the White House took a neutral position.