

Aides Say President To Stay On

By Carroll Kilpatrick
Washington Post Staff Writer

With Republican demands for resignation on the rise, the White House emphasized again yesterday that President Nixon is determined to stay in office whatever party leaders and others may say.

Press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler spoke of the President's "mood of determination," and communications director Ken W. Clawson said that the President is not going to quit "even if hell freezes over."

Yet among lower-echelon White House aides there is much less certainty that the President can much longer withstand the onslaught against him, magnified as it has been since publication of the edited tapes transcripts last week.

The White House staff seem to be divided into two groups on the issue of resignation: the small group that sees the President expresses absolute confidence that he will never resign; the larger group that has almost no personal contact with the President wonders how he can much longer withstand the pressures.

One long-time assistant, acknowledging that the situation is serious, said nevertheless that "we knew this would be a rough time. Criticisms from the Chicago Tribune and Omaha World-Herald hurt. But we are hopeful that as things settle

See PRESIDENT, A13, Col. 1

PRESIDENT, From A1

down there will be more perspective.

Another aide, declaring that Mr. Nixon had helped his cause with the speech last week announcing his decision to release the tape transcripts, said the situation would be even more desperate if the President had not spoken.

There were rumors yesterday that the President would go on the air once more in the defense of his position, but the White House said Mr. Nixon has no intention of making a public appearance before a commencement address, he

is to make at Oklahoma State University Saturday night.

Deputy press secretary Gerald A. Warren denied the accuracy of a report yesterday in The Washington Post that Mr. Nixon is at times despondent and is often exhausted.

Warren said that in a two-hour meeting with GOP congressional leaders the President was "positive and forceful and looking to the future."

C. G. (Bebe) Rebozo, the President's close friend, told reporters that Mr. Nixon was in "high spirits" and would never resign because "he is confident he has done nothing wrong." Rebozo made his comment to reporters after testifying before the Senate Watergate committee.

Warren said that Mr. Nixon was aware of the Chicago Tribune editorial calling for his resignation. The President respects the Tribune's views but "he does not agree with it," the spokesman said.

"Let me restate what I thought I made clear yesterday," Warren said. "The President has every intention to complete the work of his administration. He is determined to remain in office despite the discussions by some and attacks by others. . . He feels he has a personal and constitutional responsibility to defend the office of the President."

On Capitol Hill, Rep. Barber Conable (R-N.Y.) said the White House staff keeps circulating among congressional Republicans "seeking reassurances from us" that Mr. Nixon will not be impeached.

"They asked what the tone was on the Hill and the answer they got was 'tough,'" Conable said.

Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott (R-Pa.), who earlier this week said the tapes portray "shabby, immoral performances," sat beside Mr. Nixon at yesterday's leadership meeting.

But Scott declined to meet with reporters following the meeting, as he usually does, pleading the press of other business.

Senate Minority Whip Robert Griffin (R-Mich.) said that the meeting was "completely devoted to the economic situation" and that Watergate was not discussed nor was there any reference to Scott's criticism.

House Minority Whip Leslie C. Arends (R-Ill.) said it

would be "foolhardy" to comment on the transcripts before the House Judiciary Committee completes its study. He said he would "vote my conscience when the time comes."

"I'm not one who thinks it's time for panic," Arends said. "I'm certainly not going to tell the President to resign—no."

As one indication of the President's determination to fight on, Dean Burch, counselor to the President, issued a lengthy reply to the Chicago Tribune attack.

"What emerges from these transcripts is a President searching diligently for the truth in Watergate," Burch said. "What Richard Nixon did was right . . . The President responded to emerging internal crisis in the manner of any man at the pinnacle of leadership."

Burch acknowledged that "the reality of the transcripts grates against the revered American ideal of the presidency," but he said that Mr. Nixon "lives in the real world of tough, practical decisions."

"Regrettably, the Chicago Tribune's editorial decision is based on about 33 hours of conversation, part of an estimated 15,000 hours of presidential deliberation on foreign and domestic policy," Burch said.

He asked whether the Tribune would be "so ready to desert an old friend" if it could read transcripts on the ending of the Vietnam war, building a stronger world peace, directing negotiations in the Middle East and opening dialogues with Peking and Moscow.

"The man who accomplished these things is a great leader, a moral man, and a courageous American President," Burch said.