

Nixon Seems Determined To Resist Calls to Resign

Family, Aides Deny Rumors and Assert That Impeachment Is the Only Way He Will Be Forced to Yield Office

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WASHINGTON, May 12 — There were a number of indications today that President Nixon, whatever he may decide in the future about relinquishing his office, is now acting like a man who has made up his mind to let the constitutional impeachment process in Congress run its course. The President returned to Washington early this morning after an Oklahoma speaking engagement in which he reiterated, in response to new rounds of rumors that he would resign, his determination not to quit.

Meanwhile, J. Fred Buzhardt Jr., the White House counsel, said in a television broadcast today that the publication of some of Mr. Nixon's privately spoken, reportedly ethnic references was part of a "concerted campaign—to poison the public mind against the President by any means, fair or foul." [Details on Page 18].

More convincing than Mr. Nixon's avowal of his intention to stay in office, however, were some other indications that seemed to confirm a rather well-established policy, at least for the time being, as Mr. Nixon's Administration was buffeted by a serious erosion of conservatives within his own party.

Even though Mr. Nixon has retreated many times from adamant positions, the staff and his family have maintained a solid front of insistence that Mr. Nixon has not been deterred by the avalanche of criticism of his conduct in office.

His aides have pointed out that the rumors of resignation have circulated largely in Congress, many members of which would welcome a resignation to relieve them of going through the painful process of impeachment. The rumors have received little credence within the White House, where Mr. Nixon's mood and intentions are better known.

Mrs. David Eisenhower, who is the President's younger daughter, Julie, said in a news conference yesterday that Mr. Nixon told his family Friday night that he would not resign as long as there is one friendly Senator who supports him in his fight against impeachment. So far, the President has retained the support of the one

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Senator the White House considers key to the defeat of an impeachment move — Senator Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, who is a leader in the conservative bloc in the Senate.

Yesterday, Mr. Goldwater sought to discourage Republican efforts to press for Mr. Nixon's resignation. Should Republican leaders go to the President now and urge his resignation, Mr. Goldwater told The Washington Post, "I think he'd tell them to go to hell."

"When the time comes to resign, he'll know it," the Senator said. Mr. Goldwater said that, in his view, the evidence did not now support the need for a resignation.

Speculation of an imminent resignation grew, despite denials from the President's spokesmen, because of a serious loss of credibility in the official statements from the White House.

Mr. Nixon's press office denied any White House cover-up of the Watergate burglary before and after the President was said to have learned of it on March 21, 1973. When former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew was on the verge of resigning, the President's spokesmen denied the existence of any such move, even while White House officials were bringing pressure to force his resignation.

The statements by Mrs. Eisenhower, and her husband, David, however, were more convincing to many. They explained that the policy, evident throughout the White House, was to hold that it would be wrong for the President to resign when he believes in his innocence and when the Constitution provides an impeachment process.

Another aspect of the policy, as the Eisenhowers pointed out, is based on the President's hope that he can ride out the current round of criticism, just as he did the public uproar that followed his dismissal of the first special Watergate prosecutor, Archibald Cox, last October. Despite the loss of a number of former Republican friends and allies, the reasoning goes, the President can hold out against resigning as long as he has the support of Senator Goldwater and some others.

For some weeks now, the President, in his campaigning around the country and his shaping of policy, has been directing an appeal to the conservative block in the Senate, apparently in hopes of holding the support of the 34-Senators needed to block his conviction and removal from office.

A further sign that resignation does not appear imminent is the President's current appearance and demeanor in public.

In the past, when he has been under pressure and indecisive about what to do, he has gone into seclusion and frequently appeared irritated and preoccupied.

The Eisenhowers and some of the President's aides say Mr. Nixon hit his lowest point as to morale in April and May of last year, when the Watergate disclosures were breaking.

He had some bad periods in the summer, when, in New Orleans, he shoved his press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, in public. He slurred his words and displayed jerky movements in his speeches and news conferences.

Early this year, however, his speech delivery began to improve. He had fewer periods of seclusion. And for the last few days, he has seemed more relaxed in a number of public appearances.

Last night, he seemed to enjoy being the center of controversy as he spoke to a largely friendly crowd of more than 25,000 at Oklahoma State University. "This school once had a tradition of noncontroversial speakers. Well, now you have changed it."

"I've got the old Okie spirit, and I've got it deep down inside; we never give up," he told a crowd of several thousand admirers at Vance Air Force base near Enid earlier last evening.

A few months ago, during the energy crisis, some friendly Southern Democrats were reported to have told the President he was foolish to curtail his travel to save fuel, that the proper conduct for him was to "act like a President." Mr. Nixon apparently took their advice, because since then there has been little hesitancy in travel or other areas in which Presidents assume extraordinary prerogatives.

There was every indication this weekend that the Nixon "game plan," at least for the time being, was to resist resigning and continue to appear as strong and decisive as possible.