

Top Demos Fight Resignation Talk

Polarizing Of Nation Is Feared

Washington

Senate and House Democratic leaders came out strongly yesterday against calls for President Nixon to resign at this time, warning that it could create a generation of polarization and re-cremations if Mr. Nixon steps down before charges against him are proved through the impeachment process or the courts.

"Resignation is not the answer," said Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield (Dem-Mont.).

"This nation is going through a purgatory of sorts at present, but out of this turmoil will come a better U.S. . . . This is the time to keep cool, the evidence must be forthcoming."

Senate Democratic whip Robert C. Byrd (Dem-W. Va.) said, "If the President were to resign due to such pressures as are now engulfing the country, and by so doing terminate the impeachment inquiry now under way in the House, a significant portion of our citizens would feel that the President had been driven from office by his political enemies. The question of guilt or innocence would never be fully resolved.

"The country would remain polarized, more so than it is today. And confidence in government would remain unrestored."

Byrd also warned that the U.S. constitutional system is not a parliamentary system where a government can be swept from office by a "flashfire of public opinion."

House Speaker Carl Albert

agreed that impeachment rather than resignation is the best course. Albert said he will have nothing to do with any congressional effort to force Mr. Nixon's resignation.

(The statements made by the Senate Democratic leaders on the Senate floor in an exchange initiated by Byrd, won warm praise from conservatives of both parties, the New York Times reported.

(Many of those interviewed said that although they are upset by the revelations in the transcripts, they have concluded that they should stand fast and await developments in the House Judiciary Committee and the full House.

(The Times quoted observers as saying Mr. Nixon is unlikely to consider resignation as long as he has enough conservative support to provide him with the 34 votes he would need to avoid conviction in the Senate. He has that strength now.

(Senator William E. Brock III, (Rep-Tenn.) summarized his reasons for refraining from any call for resignation as follows:

("The President has a right to decide what he wants to do, and to have a trial if he wants it, which he seems to. And besides, there is not much chance that we could persuade him to resign until the House completes action, if at all. He wouldn't listen to us."

(Senator Carl T. Curtis (Rep-Neb.) equated resignation with "Mob rule." Senator William L. Scott (Rep-Va.), Senator James B. Allen (Dem-Ala.) and Senator Strom Thurmond (Rep-S.C.), followed in much the same vein.

(None of the Senators defended Mr. Nixon's conduct, but Thurmond described him as "the only president we have" and asked "why should we want to weaken his hand" in negotiations

with other nations.

(Oklahoma's two senators — Henry L. Bellmon and Dewey F. Bartlett, both Republicans — said that they are opposed to any concerted conservative action to call for Mr. Nixon's resignation or to suggest it privately.)

Republican Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona told reporters that he has not read the presidential tape transcripts but from reading the newspapers there is nothing in them "that could in any way fall within the constitutional confines of impeachment."

The position of Byrd and Mansfield runs counter to the demands of several Republicans in the past few days, including Senators Richard S. Schweiker (Pa.), Milton Young (N.D.), Marlow Cook (Ky.) and House GOP leadership figures John J. Rhodes (Ariz.) and John B. Anderson (Ill.) that Mr. Nixon at least give thought to whether he ought to resign.

Behind the Byrd and Mansfield position lies a fear on the part of many Democrats that a presidential resignation, unless accompanied by a confession of some guilt or a legal proceeding nailing down presidential guilt on some major charge, would allow Republicans to charge later that Mr. Nixon had been hounded unjustly from office by his political enemies on purely political grounds.

This would polarize the country still further, lead to massive and prolonged re-cremations and hurt both the nation and the Democrats, many Democrats feel. As if to justify these fears, Curtis in his Senate remarks accused the press of trying to stampede Mr. Nixon into resignation with unproved allegations.

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