

WXP Democrats on Hill Oppose Resigning

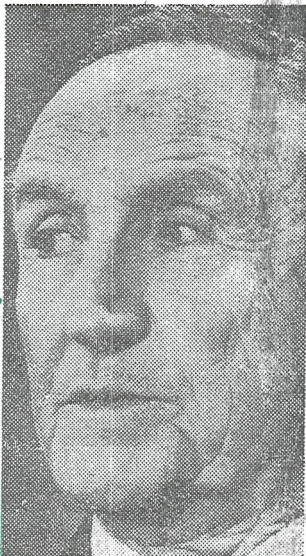
By Spencer Rich
and Carroll Kilpatrick
Washington Post Staff Writers

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

Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, said yesterday that he had urged the President not to resign and that Mr. Nixon had responded, "Don't worry, there is no chance of that whatever."

Weinberger said after meeting with the President that the "drumbeat" for resignation came "at least in part" from those in Congress who want to avoid having to vote on impeachment.

On Capitol Hill, Senate Majority leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) said, "Resignation is not the answer. 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;



SEN. MIKE MANSFIELD
... "time to keep cool"

the evidence must be forthcoming."

Senate Democratic Whip Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.) said, "If the President were to resign due to such pressure 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

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his political enemies. The question of guilt or innocence would never be fully resolved.

House Speaker Carl Albert agreed that impeachment rather than resignation was the best resolution of the problem. It is better, Albert said, for "the constitutional process to run its course. I have never suggested that the President should resign. I don't believe he will."

Albert said he would "have nothing to do with" any Congressional effort to force Mr. Nixon's resignation.

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."

He said "they don't intrigue me that much, to tell you the truth."

Finally, he said, "If you got a tape of any President in this century, with the exception of Calvin Coolidge or Woodrow Wilson, you would get the same reading, only worse."

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

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Byrd, speaking on the Senate floor, warned that the U.S. constitutional system isn't a parliamentary system where a government can be swept from office by a "flashfire of public opinion," and said that if Mr. Nixon were forced out before charges against him were proved, "this would change our system from one of fixed tenure to one in which a President would remain in office only by popular approval."

The statements by the Democratic leaders, made on the Senate floor in an exchange initiated by Byrd, won warm praise from Sens. James B. Allen (D-Ala.), Carl Curtis (R-Neb.), Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) and William L. Scott (R-Va.).

"Let's be fair, let's be fair," shouted Curtis. Time will show of course that there is a lot of hot air to charges of dairy industry bribery of the President and other charges.

Thurmond said, It is difficult for me to understand why people demand resignation. President Nixon has said he's not guilty . . . if he's not guilty, why should he resign?"

The position of Byrd and Mansfield runs completely

counter to the demands of several Republicans in the past few days, including Sens. Richard S. Schweiker (R-Pa.) Milton Young (R-N.D.), Marlow Cook (R-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 an 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 unproven allegations.

Byrd indicated yesterday that he wouldn't necessarily object to resignation somewhere down the road, perhaps before a final Senate trial began but not at very least until the House has acted on the charges.

There may very well come a time when the evidence and the circumstances are such that consideration of resignation would be justified," he said. "My concern now goes to demands for resignation of the President before the evidence has been formally acted upon by the House."

What Weinberger called the "drumbeat" of demands for Mr. Nixon's resignation appeared to subside somewhat yesterday. There were further calls for resignation, but more statements urging Congress to proceed along the constitutional path and give the President his day in court.

In Topeka, Kan., former Gov. Alf M. Landon, the 1936 GOP presidential nominee, said that of the two alternatives "impeachment is the more proper course."

Landon said in an interview with the Associated Press that he was not advocating impeachment. but that "resignation sweeps under the rug too many unanswered questions. It is the easy way."

"Therefore, I believe the best way to settle all the questions involved in President Nixon's official conduct of this critical, sordid Watergate matter, and to the complete satisfaction of the American public, is by the thorough housecleaning that the congressional impeachment proceedings can furnish," Landon said.

"That alone gives the President his day in court... and the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt."

Indianapolis Mayor Richard Lugar, long a Nixon supporter and once described as the President's "favorite mayor," said the President

has "recorded and transcribed a moral and spiritual tragedy."

In a baccalaureate address at Indiana University at Sout Bend, Lugar said Sunday the transcripts show a pattern of "sorry conduct which is deeply disappointing."

"He has weakened the trust which I cherished in his words and deeds, and I am heartsick for him and for our country," Lugar said.

Weinberger, when asked if he had read the transcripts, said that he had not done so and was too busy to do so. He said he would not have time to read the transcripts because of the pressures of his job.

Anyway, he said, they represent only a fraction of the total Nixon record and should be taken as a very small part of the Nixon performance in office.

White House spokesman Gerald L. Warren declined to comment on a Louis Harris poll showing 49 per cent of those interviewed favored the President's removal from office and a Yankelovich organization poll for Time magazine that said 55 per cent were for removal.

However, White House communications director Ken W. Clawson distributed a poll conducted by Sindlinger & Co. between April 29 and May 4 reporting a finding that 35.3 per cent thought the President should resign and 54.3 per

cent thought he should continue in office. Sindlinger said 29.9 per cent favored impeachment and 51.9 per cent opposed it.

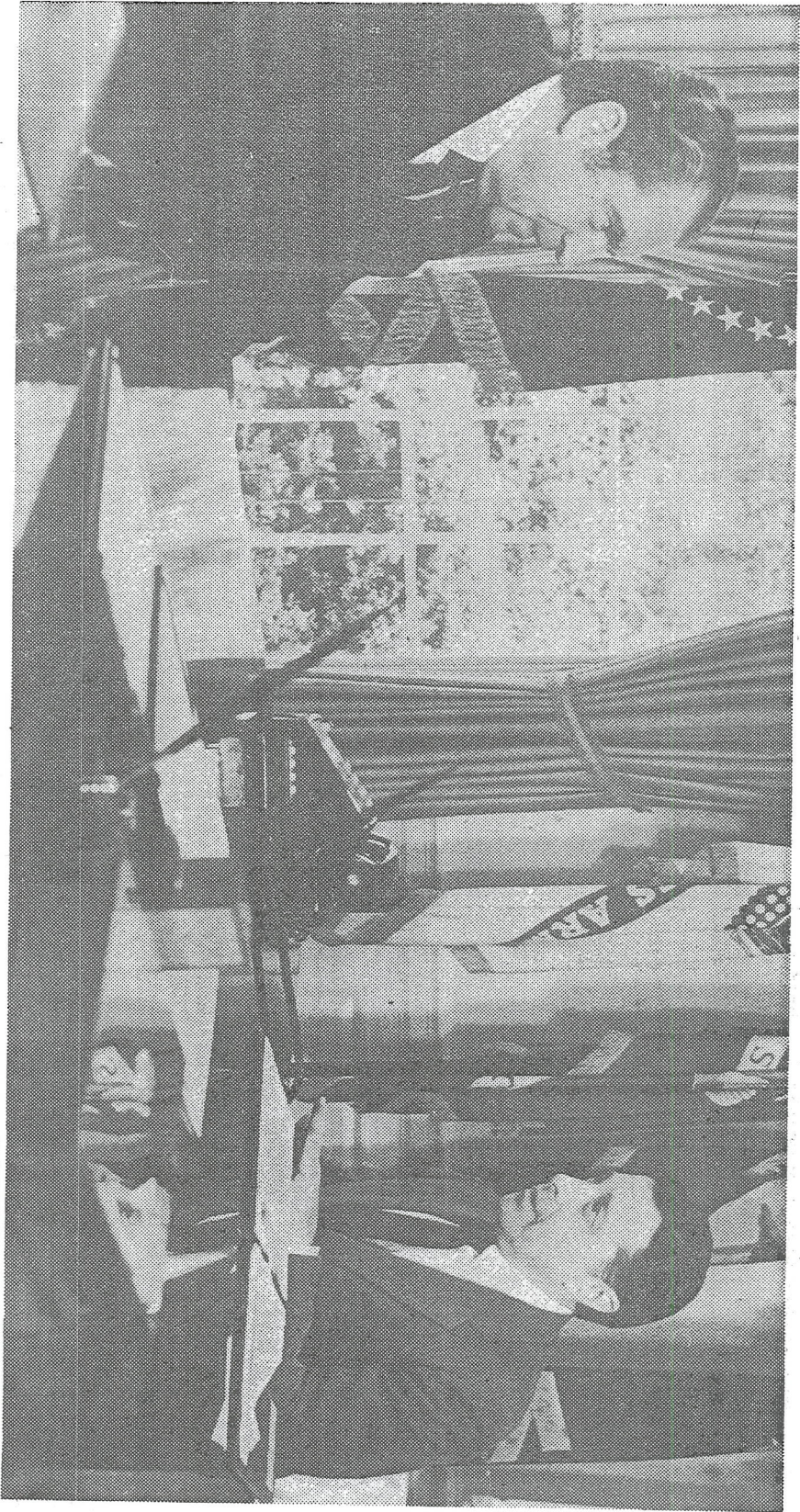
Sindlinger conducts telephone interviews while other pollsters generally rely on face-to-face interviews.

In an article in The Portland Oregonian, Gov. Tom McCall, a Republican, said the President "will very likely have been pounded to death or into physical disability" by the time the Watergate issue is resolved. McCall suggested that the

President should resign as "an act of supreme loyalty to the people of the United States."

Gov. Winfield Dunn of Tennessee was quoted as having said over the weekend that "it would be ridiculous and spineless for the President to resign now."

Dunn, chairman of the Republican Governors Conference, said that "just because we've seen some transcripts and some bad language involved—why should we run away from the President? I don't believe in kicking a man when he's down."



By Harry Nathevan—The Washington Post
President Nixon conferring with HEW Secretary Weinberger. The President assured im he would not resign, Weinberger said.