

# President Believes Worst is Now Over

By Jack Anderson

President Nixon has told aides that he believes the national outrage over the White House transcripts has died down and that he has now weathered the worst of the storm.

Sources privy to the President's private conversations say he feared for awhile that the crescendo of criticism might become overpowering. He felt the demands for his resignation, which came pouring in from Republican leaders and conservative newspapers, were "hysterical."

Ironically, the President credits Democratic leaders with abating the storm. He had frankly expected them to join in the clamor for his resignation, he has confided. Instead, House Speaker Carl Albert, Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield and Senate Democratic Whip Robert Byrd spoke out against resignation and broke the momentum.

This had the dramatic effect, the President told aides, of lawmen calming a mob at the jailhouse door.

Mr. Nixon is grateful to the opposition leaders for preventing Congress from becoming "a runaway grand jury" on the eve of the impeachment hearings. He has confidence that the responsible leaders of Congress

will now keep the impeachment proceedings on an even course.

**Vietnam Spending**—The Vietnam war may have disappeared from the front pages, but the American taxpayers are still financing South Vietnam's military effort.

Two unreleased studies disclose that the U.S. is now paying 86 per cent of the cost of maintaining the Saigon regime and that Saigon may be dependent upon American aid for the rest of this century.

President Nixon is asking for \$2.4 billion in military and economic aid for Saigon for the coming year. This amounts to 32 per cent of the total U.S. aid for the entire world. Counting Laos and Cambodia, the embattled peninsula will get close to half of all U.S. aid.

The studies were conducted by the Indochina Resource Center, a private research group which keeps a close watch on Southeast Asian affairs, and by a unit of the American Friends Service Committee.

South Vietnam's economy, warn the studies, "in the manner of a heroin user, is addicted to American aid." They quote a confidential World Bank study, which concludes Saigon will still require \$770 million a year in 1980 and \$300 million to \$450 million in 1990. Looking beyond 1990, the World Bank claims

"Saigon will continue to remain highly dependent on foreign aid."

In short, the studies contend that the Saigon government is an "artificial state," kept afloat mainly by the generosity of the American taxpayers.

The biggest drain on the South Vietnamese economy, charge the studies, is corruption. "Certainly more than a few (Saigon) subjects are millionaires or nearly so," the documents state, and "there are probably several hundred" who together could pay the government's bills "each year for a decade hence."

These South Vietnamese profiteers are able to escape heavy taxation. Consequently, state the reports, "indigenous Vietnamese tax revenues have not any time in the last decade produced more than 15 per cent of the total resources spent to sustain" the government.

**Closing Costs** — Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.) has been trying to lower real estate closing costs, a racket that costs the homebuyers \$14 billion a year.

But he has been outmaneuvered in the backrooms by Sen. Bill Brock (R-Tenn.) the handsome banker's son who seems to take his signals from the counting houses.

As private correspondence between the two antagonists

show, Proxmire thought he could bring his subcommittee around to forcing the Housing and Urban Development Department to crack down on closing costs.

But Brock wanted to take this power away from the government, leaving homeowners to the tender mercies of the title companies, title searchers and insurers, real estate lawyers and others who profit from high closing costs.

Brock offered some reforms in a double play that would also strip the government of its authority to regulate closing costs. Enticed by the reforms, even such consumer men as Sens. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), Adlai Stevenson (D-Ill.), and Bob Packwood (R-Ore.) supported Brock's maneuver.

Meanwhile, in the House, Rep. Leonor Sullivan (D-Mo.) was so upset over a parallel move by Rep. Robert Stephens (D-Ga.) to fleece homebuyers that she wrote personal letters to members of the House Banking Committee. "It would be extremely unwise," she pleaded with them, to accept the Stephens measure.

Footnote: Brock insisted to us that he has the best interests of homebuyers, not banks, at heart. Consumer men who voted with Brock said they were getting the best bill possible, under the circumstances.