

# Ford concerned about Nixon's 'stonewalling'

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Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Nixon's hardened attitude toward the House impeachment inquiry appears to have created the first serious public differences between him and Vice President Ford.

Ford is making it clear he disapproves of what he calls Nixon's "stonewall attitude" and that he fears it may be the catalyst that brings about the President's impeachment.

At the same time he indicates his oft-stated pleas for compromise and moderation are falling on deaf ears and that he sees no sign the President plans to reverse his course.

For weeks now, Ford has been issuing periodic public warnings that Nixon's plight would be deepened by a refusal to cooperate as fully as possible with the House Judiciary Committee.

A veteran of 25 years in the House, Ford knows the sensitivities of congressmen and realizes that Nixon's refusal to cooperate will alienate even those House members eager to support the President.

This is, in fact, what is happening within the Judiciary Committee, as shown by its lopsided votes in favor of subpoenaing evidence Nixon refuses to give.

On Wednesday, Nixon set off a new showdown by telling the panel he would give it no further Watergate material.

That night at a GOP rally in Wilmington, Del., Ford was asked if he would use his good offices to bring about compliance with demands for evidence so Republicans could put Watergate behind them.

Ford gave his usual response about the large amount of material Nixon had already provided, then added that, after it is digested, "if they want any more that is

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● The President, facing "very difficult decisions," views it as his "unique responsibility" to defend his office "against excessive encroachment," Press Secretary Ziegler says. Page 12

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relevant to the issue, to the impeachable offenses in the Constitution, I hope the President will give it to them, the sooner the better."

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Late Thursday morning, Nixon summoned Ford to one of their periodic chats.

That afternoon, in New York for a speech, Ford looked unusually somber and aides said he was "a little uptight" because the meeting with Nixon had thrown his schedule off.

Later that night Ford gave more of a clue about what might have been bothering him.

In an interview with ABC's Bill Zimmerman, he indicated the White House had again rejected his advice and said, "It seems to me that a stonewall attitude isn't necessarily the wisest policy."

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In another interview Friday with the Washington Star-News, Ford said President Nixon "didn't give me any reason to believe" he would change his position on supplying additional material to the committee.

Now, based on his knowledge of the House of Representatives, Ford is trying to tell the White House what will happen if Nixon persists in his course, knowing that failure to get the message across could put him into the Presidency.