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# Strauss' View of Evidence

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Washington

Democratic National Chairman Robert S. Strauss yesterday described the Watergate evidence against President Nixon as "so devastating and overwhelming" it would be "incredible" if the House did not vote for impeachment.

Strauss, who said he spoke as "a lawyer of some maturity and the leader of my party," previously had refused to pass public judgment on whether Mr. Nixon should be impeached, saying he wanted to avoid making impeachment appear a partisan issue.

He decided to speak out, he said at a breakfast yesterday with reporters, after spending the weekend reading materials released by the House Judiciary Com-

mittee and "gossiping" about it with his wife, Helen.

Strauss' remarks heartened proponents of impeachment, who have complained that Democrats have not been forceful enough in making the case against Mr. Nixon. Charles Morgan Jr., director of the Washington office of the American Civil Liberties Union, called Strauss' statement "a sign of leadership" by the Democrats.

House Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma and Majority Leader Thomas P. O'Neill of Massachusetts have said they will not decide how to vote on impeachment until the Judiciary Committee has reported.

Both apparently were taken by surprise by Strauss' statement.

Informed of Strauss' remarks at San Clemente, deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren said: "I'll rest on what Mr. (James) St. Clair (chief White House Watergate lawyer) has said about the evidence. And he has heard it and Mr. Strauss has not."

*Los Angeles Times*