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Nixon Pinning Hope On South, Goldwater

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— The White House is slowly developing an anti-impeachment strategy that relies heavily on the South, the party loyalty of Sen. Barry Goldwater and the presumption that a long trial in the Senate will test the patience of the American people.

"The name of the game is getting a decision after the November election," said one well-informed source. "Republicans will then be free to vote the evidence."

This comment reflects the dogma shared within the White House that the evidence against the President is flimsy and that some Republicans in the House and Senate are tempted to support impeachment for political reasons. White House officials uniformly cite the pro-impeachment stand taken by Rep. Lawrence Hogan, who is running for governor of Maryland, as an example of what "political considerations" can cause Republicans to do.

However, the White House intends to obtain whatever advantage is obtainable from "political considerations" that work the other way. Preliminary head-counting places heavy reliance on the votes of sen-



SEN. BARRY GOLDWATER
... holds key in Senate

ators from the South, where Mr. Nixon is believed to be far more popular than in any other region.

The White House also is counting on the support of Goldwater, the 1964 GOP presidential nominee. Goldwater is perceived as a symbol of integrity whose stand would influence Western Republican senators and Southern senators of both parties.

Much of the White House hopefulness derives from a
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belief that the Senate will be unable to adhere to the timetable issued by Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) for a speedy trial that would begin soon after Labor Day.

With Mr. Nixon about to enter the final 29 months of his second term, White House officials are beginning to believe that time is on their side.

One longtime associate of the President points out that the impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson lasted more than two months and that "the facts were stipulated in this case." This presidential associate goes on to predict an impeachment trial lasting nine to 11 months, during which Mr. Nixon's supporters presumably would minutely contest each point of evidence.

"This would produce a hemorrhaging effect and a considerable trauma in the country," he adds.

It is the expectation of some White House aides that a trial of this duration would produce a popular reaction against the Congress, particularly if inflation and other economic problems become steadily worse while the impeachment proceedings grind on. In this circumstance, they say, there would be a demand for a quick verdict. Some aides also believe that Democratic senators will become increasingly reluctant, once the 1976 election approaches, to remove Mr. Nixon and enable Vice President Ford to run as an incumbent President.

It is difficult, in conversations with aides and friends of the President here, to separate the actual White House strategy from mere wishful thinking. That is because the official line is that no strategy exists at all.

Though President Nixon is known to have talked about the prospects of a Senate trial on at least two occasions, the official White House position as enunciated by chief of staff Alexander M. Haig Jr. and press secretary Ronald L. ZIEGLER is that impeachment will be defeated by the full House. They say that Senate strategy is not even under discussion.

One aide pointed out privately that the White House would only weaken its position in the House if it acknowledged the inevitability of a Senate trial.

White House officials talk with relative freedom—although not for attribution—about the strategy to defeat impeachment in the House. They say it is being coordinated by chief legislative liaison William Timmons with key roles assigned to counsellor Dean Burch, House liaison Max Friedersdorf and to William Baroody, a White House official who served as a longtime aide to departed counsellor Melvin Laird.

Baroody is supposed to keep track of Republicans who are leaning toward impeachment, one source said. These Republicans, in turn, will face renewed efforts from Nixon loyalists in their districts and in the House to convince them of the desirability of anti-impeachment vote.

Presumably, some of these Republicans also will receive the once-coveted invitations to sail with Mr. Nixon aboard the presidential yacht Sequoia, although this is a tactic that is currently under re-evaluation.

"The Sequoia trips have received so much publicity that they've become counter-productive," said one White House aide. "If a congressman takes one of these trips and then votes against impeachment, it may look to some people like he's being unduly influenced."

In the coming fight on the House floor the White House also is relying on key help from Minority Leader John Rhodes of Arizona, who has refused to take any role until a decision is made by the House Judiciary Committee, and on assistance from Vice President Ford.

While acknowledging that Ford is unwilling to use "pressure tactics" on his former colleagues, one White House aide said he expects the Vice President to use "friendly persuasion" with his many former colleagues in the House. The animosity felt by White House officials toward Ford for his demands that President Nixon supply the evidence subpoenaed by the Judiciary Committee is evaporating in appreciation of his repeated public declarations of Mr. Nixon's innocence.

In addition to their avowed goal of defeating the impeachment resolutions on the House floor—a goal that now seems well beyond the range of accomplishment—

the White House perceives two additional benefits in a House fight. One is the benefit of a delayed House vote, which could insure that the Senate will be unable to vote on impeachment before election.

Some White House officials also believe that an all-out fight against impeachment on the floor, even if unsuccessful, will reduce the pro-impeachment majority and therefore make it more difficult to obtain a two-thirds majority in the Senate.

The President will play a personal role in the efforts of the White House to avert impeachment. But he is expected to take his case to the country in a more subtle way than he did last winter when "Operation Candor" aimed at convincing Americans of his innocence was in full swing.

The new presidential effort will feature a series of carefully timed speeches dealing with the economy and other key issues before friendly audiences in strategic parts of the country.

Its aim is to portray the President as a man who is preoccupied with the important foreign and domestic business of the country at a time when the Congress is concerned only with impeachment.

This strategy seeks to divert the growing frustration of Americans over inflation from the President to the Congress—and in the process enable President Nixon to finish out his now-imperiled term.

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