

Rejects Demands Nixon Says He Won't Resign From Supporters For Resignation

By Carroll Kilpatrick
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With resignation demands coming from some of his staunchest supporters in Congress, President Nixon yesterday told his Cabinet he does not intend to resign and believes that the constitutional process should be allowed to run its course.

The beleaguered President, who has acknowledged that his cause in the House is hopeless, was quoted by one Cabinet officer as declaring that resignation "is not the course to follow. For me to resign would be something outside the Constitution."

Nevertheless, despite the President's determination, events moved with such speed yesterday that presidential supporters acknowledged that resignation is a possibility, if not now, before a Senate trial.

Deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren confirmed a Washington Post report that at Camp David last weekend the President considered the possibility of resignation.

"Obviously, the President did not choose that course," Warren said.

While the President maintained his struggle to stay in office, the pressures on him mounted, from within his own party, both in the House and the Senate.

In seeking ways to defend himself, the President has for the time being rejected proposals that he speak once more to the nation on television. But he still has under consideration a suggestion that he address a joint session of Congress, aides said.

Meanwhile, as part of contingency planning, aides are preparing material for a possible speech should the President decide to resign.

No one at the Cabinet meeting suggested that the President resign, and no Cabinet member offered his own resignation, Secretary of the Treasury William E. Simon and others present said.

Simon, who spoke to a large number of reporters at the White House, said Mr. Nixon "sincerely believes" that he has committed no impeachable offense.

The President expressed his resolve not to allow the tragedy of Watergate to prevent his administration from attending to the nation's business, Simon said.

Secretary of Labor Peter J. Brennan and Secretary of Commerce Frederick B. Dent, who stood by while Simon spoke, confirmed his account.

Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, who stayed for a private meeting with the President, said when he departed that "the foreign policy of the United States is always and continues to be conducted on a bipartisan basis in the national interest and in the interest of world peace.

"When questions of peace or war are considered no foreign government should have any doubts about the way in which foreign policy will be conducted."

As Kissinger entered his car, a reporter asked if he believed the President should resign. But Kissinger drove off without replying.

Another Cabinet officer, who declined to allow his name to be used, said the President began the meeting by speaking for 15 minutes about the possibility of being im-

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peached. He told the Cabinet he had considered resignation and that some people had advised him it would be best to resign.

But Mr. Nixon said he was not in the position of an ordinary citizen in this matter and must be governed by the Constitution.

The Constitution provides a process for this kind of problem and that process should be used, Mr. Nixon said. He said he released the tapes because he wants the evidence out, adding that he does not believe he has committed an impeachable offense.

Vice President Gerald R. Ford, who sits across the Cabinet table from the President, then made some comments explaining his public statement Monday declaring that he would stop talking about the impeachment issues.

However, the Vice President told the Cabinet he would continue to talk about what he regarded as the President's achievements.

The President complimented the Cabinet and said it was a good one. "Do your extra best to run the government," a Cabinet officer quoted the President as saying "The important thing is that this government be run right in these difficult times."

The President said it was very important that the government continue operating despite the strains of impeachment, one member said.

Kissinger added that it was important not only for the governmental process but so that the world would recognize that the American government is strong enough to go through impeachment and yet carry on in a normal way.

The President, according to Cabinet members present, said he had gone through the arguments for and against resignation from A to Z. Although he had received advice from personal friends and political colleagues that he ought to spare himself and his family the ordeal and preserve his financial advantages that would be saved by resignation, he concluded that these considerations were immaterial. The word "resignation" is not in the Constitution, Mr. Nixon noted.

"There was no uncertainty in his mind as to what his course is going to be," one

member said. "There was no suggestion that he would resign. It is totally foreign to what he would do."

No one in the room challenged the President's arguments.

The discussion of impeachment took nearly half an hour. Matters then turned to the budget, the economy and inflation for about an hour.

One member, asked how the President looked, said, "Obviously, he has been through a tortuous period of decision and analysis. He appeared to show it. His speech wasn't flowing. But after he got into topics dealing with the economy and international affairs, he seemed to get back his old gait, to have gotten a kind of second wind."

Roy L. Ash, director of the Office of Management and Budget, told the Cabinet meeting that Mr. Nixon might have to veto a series of money bills to prevent excessive spending.

Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton, who has been a staunch Nixon supporter in the crisis, declined to speak to reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

He confined himself to this statement issued through the Interior Department's press office:

"As to the matter of impeachment, I accept the President's desire to see the constitutional process go forward in an orderly manner. He has decided that his resignation would not serve the Republic, and has reaffirmed his commitment not to resign.

"As to the Interior Department, we are reviewing our entire spectrum of programs in preparation for the presentation of the fiscal 1976 budget and legislative plans."

Kenneth Rush, counselor to the President for economic affairs, said after the meeting he had never seen the President look better.

"He was very relaxed, in excellent humor, never better," Rush said.

Regarding the decision to carry on as President, Rush said Mr. Nixon "made the decision," and that "no dissent was expressed to that decision . . . Everyone rallied behind (him)."

Rush said the President did not go around the table asking for opinions but that

there was an atmosphere of "everyone saying they were going to back the President . . . all going to do what we can to run our operation and cooperate fully."

Asked how he felt about Mr. Nixon, whom he has known since he taught him law at Duke University, Rush said "the President is one of the strongest, most dedicated men to the country I have known.

"As you use hindsight with the tapes many different interpretations can arise. He did nothing he thought was wrong, nothing that would justify either impeachment or conviction.

"I know he's always been absolutely honest and truthful with me in every way."

Warren told reporters that there was no change in the President's relations with the Vice President now that Ford has decided he should no longer speak on the impeachment defense.

Asked if Mr. Nixon has been in touch with any Republican leaders in Congress since he returned from California July 28, Warren said he had not. The President has had only two official appointments, one with Simon last week and the Cabinet meeting yesterday.

Mr. Nixon has met almost exclusively with two persons: Alexander M. Haig Jr., White House staff chief, and press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler, to the annoyance of other advisers.

At Camp David Sunday, the President conferred indirectly with Haig, Ziegler, James D. St. Clair, his attorney, and speech writers Raymond K. Price and Patrick J. Buchanan.

However, the President saw only Haig and Ziegler. The others met in separate quarters to help draft the presidential statement released Monday and to confer on other matters. Their opinions and decisions were transmitted to the President by Haig or Ziegler.

Reporters were allowed into the Cabinet room briefly at the beginning of yesterday's session while photographers took pictures.

The president was smiling, chatting with those seated near him and he appeared to be relaxed. He displayed no signs of tension or concern.