

Nixon Reported  
Undecided on  
Resigning; His Staff  
Said to Want Him to  
Step Down; Goldwater  
Sees Only 15 Votes  
in Senate

## 'GLOOMY' PICTURE

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### President Has Talk on Impeachment With 3 Party Leaders NYTimes

By JOHN HERBERS

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 7—

Three Republican leaders indicated today that President Nixon was now leaving open the possibility of resignation, and they said he had told them he would base his decision on the national interest.

The President's state of mind was described late this afternoon by Hugh Scott, the Senate Republican leader; Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, and Representative John J. Rhodes, the House Republican leader, after a 30-minute meeting with Mr. Nixon in the Oval Office.

They met with Mr. Nixon as members of the White House staff exerted pressure on the President to resign. And similar pressure continued to mount in Congress.

The three Republican leaders told reporters on the White House lawn that they had come to see the President at his invitation to discuss the impeachment picture.

"We have told him the situation is very gloomy on Capitol Hill," said Senator Scott, adding that they did not advise him what to do, and that he did not tell them what he was contemplating.

#### 'Four Old Friends'

"No decision has been made," Mr. Scott said, and Mr. Rhodes, who announced yesterday that he would vote for impeachment, said, "The President was in good spirits and good health, and as four old friends we talked over a very distressing situation."

Tonight, Mr. Goldwater said in a telephone news conference that he and Mr. Scott had told Mr. Nixon that he could count on no more than 15 votes for acquittal if he was tried by the Senate.

He also said that he would be willing to become Vice President if Vice President Ford became President and asked him

#### Nixon's Feet on Desk

At the White House, the normal work routine went on as usual, but staff members, from secretaries to officials close to the center of power, admitted to being dismayed and adrift as Mr. Nixon's Presidency apparently moved to-

ward its conclusion. Many staff members were wondering where they would find their next job.

Senator Scott told reporters that the President had his feet on his desk throughout the meeting and told all three men to give him their assessment on impeachment and conviction but not to discuss "collateral

Continued on Page 22, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

issues."

This presumably referred to Congressional moves to offer the President immunity from conviction if he resigned.

All three, Mr. Scott said, told the President the situation was "gloomy."

"He asked me," Mr. Scott said. "I said, 'Gloomy.' He said, 'Damn gloomy?' I said, 'Yes, sir.'"

The meeting at the White House followed a confused day of rumors that Mr. Nixon was on the verge of resigning, while the President, in seclusion with a few members of his staff and his family, maintained his public posture that he would not resign but would let the constitutional process of impeachment run its course.

There were a number of indications, however, that the President had told a number of persons that he was indeed considering resigning.

At a news conference for members of the Arizona press, Senator Goldwater said that question of whether Congress could give the President immunity was being researched. He said, however, that immunity had not been discussed at his meeting with Mr. Nixon.

Members of the White House staff said privately that a movement was under way within the staff to persuade Mr. Nixon to resign. They said that pressures for resignation increased throughout the day, and that the movement was led by Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., the President's chief of staff.

On the other hand, the President's family, who stayed with Mr. Nixon in his White House offices during what was described as "a day of agony" for all of them, apparently urged Mr. Nixon not to resign.

Rabbi Baruch Korff, chairman of the National Citizens' Committee for Fairness to the Presidency, emerged from a meeting with the President this afternoon with a grim face. Later, he issued a statement saying that unless the White House was flooded with telegrams against resignation in the next few days, Mr. Nixon "may resign in the national interest."

Rabbi Korff has led a grass roots citizens' movement against impeachment and has repeatedly urged Mr. Nixon not to resign.

What emerged at the end of the day was a President faced with almost certain removal from office, torn between his own stated inclination to cling to office until the last and the advice of his staff and former political supporters to quit and turn the Administration over to Vice President Ford.

#### Staff Seems in Disarray

All day long, the White House staff seemed to be in disarray, and Mr. Nixon spent hours alternately in his Oval Office and his office across Executive Avenue in the Exec-

utive Office Building conferring with General Haig and others.

For some days, a number of Mr. Nixon's staff members, including Patrick J. Buchanan, a speech writer who has been with him since 1966, have been recommending resignation. But one person close to the White House said today that resignation pressure from within the staff "was made potent and respectful" by the fact that General Haig, who heads the staff, was actively promoting resignation.

General Haig did not respond to telephone calls for comment.

The fact that Mr. Nixon met with the Congressional leaders was an indication that he might be leaning to resignation. He had not seen or talked to a member of Congress since he returned to Washington from San Clemente almost two weeks ago, and just yesterday he told his Cabinet that his mind was set against resigning.

"He invited us down this afternoon to disclose to him the actual situation in the House and Senate regarding his position," Mr. Goldwater said after the meeting.

Republican leaders had for some time been expressing a desire to see the President and were mystified by his seclusion.

"We were extremely impressed," Mr. Goldwater said "with the uppermost thought on his mind, which is the whatever decision is made will be in the national interest. No decision has been made. We made no suggestions."

The Congressional leaders denied reports that they had delivered to Mr. Nixon a draft of legislation they were prepared to introduce giving the President immunity against prosecution if he resigned.

"No, that subject was not touched on," Mr. Rhodes said. And as to resignation, Mr. Scott said, "That question did not even come up."

#### A Crisis Atmosphere

Throughout the way, there was a crisis atmosphere at the White House. Crowds of people gathered on the sidewalk along Pennsylvania Avenue and stared through the cast iron bars of the fence. Presidential aides rushed from one office to another, with grave expressions on their faces.

The bulletin board in the press room, which has the President's schedule for the

day, was bare. Gerald L. Warren, the President's spokesman, said in a daily briefing that Mr. Nixon arrived in the Oval Office early in the morning and later moved to the Executive Office Building, and that he conferred from time to time with General Haig, Ronald L. Ziegler, his press secretary, and William E. Timmons, his chief lobbyist in Congress.

Later in the day, his family and Rabbi Korff gathered with him in the Executive Office Building. Shortly before 5 P.M., the three Congressional leaders arrived by automobile and were ushered into the West Wing. A few minutes later, the President, accompanied by Mr. Ziegler, emerged from the Executive Office Building and entered the White House for the meeting, as a large crowd of reporters and photographers and small groups of White House employes watched.

Rabbi Korff is a short man

with a round face that is usually smiling, but when he left the meeting with Mr. Nixon he was grave. He was accompanied by Bruce Herschensohn, a Presidential assistant who has been working with pro-Nixon citizens groups. The rabbi would not talk to reporters but later issued a statement.

"Unless there is an immediate outpouring of support addressed to the White House by Americans of all persuasions and believes as I do the President has been vilified and savaged, it is my opinion and only my opinion he may resign in the national interest," he said. "I invite the millions of Americans who feel as I do to flood the White House with support of the President."

At the end of the day, the official White House position still was that the President would not resign but would ride out the impeachment process to the end. The press office would not add to what the Congressional leaders said, other than that the President's family rejoined him in the Oval Office after the meeting. All were said to be in good spirits.

#### Comment by St. Clair

James D. St. Clair, the President chief defense counsel, was asked by reporters at the United States Court House here whether Mr. Nixon would resign. He gave a measured response: "I have no knowledge that the President plans to resign."

Mrs. David Eisenhower, the President's younger daughter, was reported by several persons to have consistently urged her father not to resign. She and her sister, Mrs. Edward F. Cox, and Mrs. Nixon have been at the White House for several days as the President has seen his support in Congress crumble. Mrs. Nixon has had no official engagements for some time and was reported to be spending her hours comforting her husband and in answering letters from supporters.

Yesterday's Cabinet meeting, in which Mr. Nixon announced his resolve not to quit, had, as one of the participants said today, a "surreal quality." The official said that Mr. Nixon had talked about impeachment as if someone else, not himself, were involved.

"He seemed to be fully resigned to being impeached and convicted," the official said.

"He opened the meeting by saying that he wanted to discuss the subject that was uppermost in the minds of everyone — inflation," he said. "But then he said there was another subject he wanted to address, also, and before he got to inflation he talked for about 25 minutes about impeachment."