

Reports on His Homes Rile Nixon

San Clemente

The White House said yesterday President Nixon is appalled by what he regards as malicious reports that suggestions regarding the purchase of his ocean-side estate here.

Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler said Mr. Nixon's reaction was one of disbelief when he read a report yesterday in the Los Angeles Times, which reported that special Watergate counsel

for Archibald Cox has been in a preliminary meeting with the purchase and improvement of presidential homes here and at Key Biscayne, Fla.

In Los Angeles, John Haven, managing editor of the Times, denied all that the Times did not originate the story but it was reported information from Times reporters by a source familiar with the matter.

The reports allegedly confirmed that Cox's office had sought information on the Nixon properties from White House and the General Services Administration, Haver said.

The Times reporters' investigators, according to the source, particularly wanted to know if any Republican campaign funds or money from unions or corporations helped to finance the purchase of the San Clemente Villa.

Asked about the report, Ziegler first referred newsmen to a statement by Cox's office that no consideration had been given at this point to launching a formal investigation of Mr. Nixon's real estate activities.

'UNTRUE'

Ziegler said statements suggesting the use of campaign funds or of any impropriety "are malicious, unfounded and scurrilous in nature and are categorically untrue."

The White House spokes-

man reported "the President is appalled" by what Ziegler described as a malicious and persistent effort to suggest wrongdoing.

Asked if Mr. Nixon felt some one was "out to get him," Ziegler said he had no way of determining the source of what he pictured as a rash of reports but said, "I'm not charging any individual with maliciousness."

Responding to questions, he flatly denied that any

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corporations which funds were authorized in the purchase of the San Clemente property, and insisted that the White House has given "accurate, precise and factual" reports of the circumstances surrounding the San Clemente purchase.

Reminded that the White House has repeatedly refused to name the investment company which is reported to own the bulk of the San Clemente land, Ziegler said, "We do not have the responsibility for and direct will not provide information on sources of funds for presidential activities."

Mittelman, who said that Robert L. Appleby, an Orange County assessor, has been accused by the investment company of

TAXED

Ziegler said was charged from a report in Orange County Register Santa Ana which said Mr. Nixon's San Clemente home had been under taxed by at least \$35,000 and perhaps as much as \$100,000 because of a tax assessment that the newspaper reported is being investigated by the State Board of Equalization, which monitors assessment practices.

The press secretary said the article left the suggestion that Mr. Nixon or someone at the White House had intervened to obtain a low assessment. He went on:

"We have absolutely nothing to do with tax assessments . . . the tax assessors should assess. That's their job."

The Register quoted Orange County assessor Jack Vallerga as saying the current value placed on Mr. Nixon's property is \$1.37

million. Mr. Nixon paid \$1.5 million for the property in 1969 and the General Services Administration reported on June 21 spending \$703,367 for improvements, most of them attributed to security considerations.

GIFT

The Register also noted that since Mr. Nixon purchased the estate, a six-hole golf course has been installed as a gift to the President.

The Times said Mr. Nixon's property transactions had attracted the attention of Cox's staff because of White House reluctance to disclose all details, and because the transaction was handled by attorney Herbert W. Kimbarn, who raised money for the Watergate defendants.

A reporter told Ziegler the White House has offered absolutely no documentation to establish the source of the money used to purchase the California estate. He insisted the documentation consisted of a recent White House statement outlining the transaction.

Referring to suggestions of wrongdoing, Ziegler admitted there is absolutely no documentation or record of evidence contained by anyone to make these charges.

The statement also detailed the federally financed improvements.

Speaking of the house purchase and the improvements, Ziegler said, "We do not intend to issue any further statement on this subject."

Asked if Mr. Nixon felt there was some sort of campaign plot to destroy him, Ziegler replied:

"I simply will let you draw your own evaluation as an observer of things that are happening in our society."

Associated Press

How land?