

Nixon, Caught in Middle, Reversed Stand

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WASHINGTON. — President Nixon's turnabout on the Watergate affair, apparently forced on him by fellow Republicans who demanded that he do something to clear the air, could hardly have been more complete.

LAST AUG. 29, in a press conference at San Clemente, Calif. Mr. Nixon said his White House counsel, John W. Dean 3d, had conducted a "complete investigation of all leads which might involve any present members of the White House staff or anybody in the government," and he added:

"I can say categorically that his (Dean's) investigation indicates that no one in the White House staff, no one in this administration, presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident."

The only high officials not covered in this sweeping assertion were former Attorney General John Mitchell, who left the cabinet to head Nixon's re-election committee in April and quit the committee in July, 10 days after the Watergate bugging was discovered, and former Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans, who was then finance chairman of the re-election committee.

ON MARCH 2, after the trial of the seven Watergate defendants, Mr. Nixon told another press conference: "The investigation conducted by Mr. Dean . . . indicates that no one on the White House staff at the time he conducted the investigation—that was last July and August—was involved or had knowledge of the Watergate matter."

ON MARCH 20, Mr. Nixon told Sen. Hugh Scott (R., Pa.). "I have nothing to hide. The White House has nothing to hide. I repeat, we have nothing to hide and you are authorized to make that statement in my name." Scott passed on Mr. Nixon's denial to reporters on March 24—three days after the President said he began his latest

Martha Wants Nixon to Name Names

WASHINGTON (UPI).—Martha Mitchell said Tuesday night it was "incredible" that President Nixon did not name high officials she insists were involved in the Watergate bugging episode.

Asked in a telephone interview from her New York City apartment which officials she had in mind, the wife of former Attorney General John H. Mitchell said: "I wouldn't tell you on the telephone."

Mrs. Mitchell also said White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler was lying Tuesday when he said Mitchell had met only with domestic adviser John D. Ehrlichman at the White House on Saturday, and not with the

President.

"That's a goddamn lie," she said. Mrs. Mitchell said she personally took a telephone call from the President on Saturday morning when Mr. Nixon summoned her husband to Washington. She said her husband "went down to see the President. You don't think he's going to see Ehrlichman."

When her husband left New York, she said, she sent along a message to Mr. Nixon "that by God, they had better get the Watergate over in a hurry."

The President's reply, relayed by her husband, was that "he'd get it over with," she said.

inquiry.

The retreat on White House aides testifying before Congress was equally dramatic.

ON MARCH 2, Mr. Nixon said, "No President could ever agree to allow the counsel to the president (Dean) to go down and testify before a committee . . . Members of the White House staff . . . cannot be brought before a Congressional committee in a formal hearing for testimony."

TEN DAYS LATER, Mr. Nixon in a formal statement on the doctrine of executive privilege, said that members or former members of the President's personal staff "normally shall follow the well established precedent and decline a request for a formal appearance before a committee of Congress."

ON MARCH 15, the President again stated that "members of the White House staff will not appear before a

committee of Congress in any formal session." He said he would "welcome a court test of this issue."

As recently as April 10, Attorney General Richard Kleindienst declared that no employe of the entire 2.5 million-member executive branch could testify if the president ordered him not to.

The Kleindienst statement was the high-water mark of the administration's defiant non-cooperation. That changed drastically Tuesday. As the President's statement made clear, White House aides—past and present—will testify, under oath, in formal sessions of the Senate's Watergate investigating committee.

And Mr. Nixon, instead of denying the possibility of wrongdoing by White House aides, was talking about the possibility of one or more of them being indicted, suspended, prosecuted or convicted.