

Nixon Says He Called

Pat 3/7/74

From News Dispatches

President Nixon said last night that he rejected as wrong any payment of hush money or offer of clemency to the original defendants in the Watergate breakin.

Mr. Nixon thus restated the position described by H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, his former chief of staff, in Senate testimony. Haldeman has been indicted on perjury charges in connection with that testimony.

The President said other persons might reach a different conclusion in reading a transcript or listening to a tape of the White House conversation last March 21.

But Mr. Nixon said he knows what was said and what he meant about payoffs for the silence of the Watergate defendants.

It was on March 21, the President said, that Dean first told him money raised for the defendants was to buy their silence.

He said he questioned Dean at length on the matter and "then we came to what I considered to be the bottom line. I pointed out that raising the money was something that could be done. I pointed out that that was linked to clemency . . . that unless a promise of clemency was made, the

objective of hush money would not be achieved . . .

"I then said the payment of clemency would be wrong. In fact, I think I can quote it directly, I said the promise of clemency would be wrong."

Then he added, "I know what I meant . . . I meant that the whole transaction was wrong."

"I never at any time authorized clemency for any of the defendants. I never at any time authorized the payment of money to any of the defendants," Mr. Nixon added.

The President said that after Dean failed to bring back a report on March 30—he misspoke and said Aug. 30—

Hush-Money 'Wrong'

he directed John D. Ehrlichman to make the investigation and received a report in mid-April.

He was asked if he would consider clemency to any former associate.

The President said such offers are based on individual cases. No defendant, he added, had been offered clemency or will be offered clemency.

Later, the President said he was not flatly ruling out clemency "to any individual depending on a personal tragedy or something of that sort.

"What I'm saying is that I will not be granting clemency because of Watergate," he said. "That I'm ruling out."

Before starting to respond to ques-

tions about the Watergate scandal, Mr. Nixon opened the session by saying that the Senate, by sustaining his veto of an emergency energy bill, had "vetoed longer gas lines and vetoed nationwide rationing."

Mr. Nixon said—as his chief Watergate lawyer James D. St. Clair had said earlier in U.S. District Court yesterday—that he would provide the House Judiciary Committee all the evidence he also has given Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski.

He said he also would answer—under oath—written questions from the committee on matters not covered by tapes and documents. But he declined to say

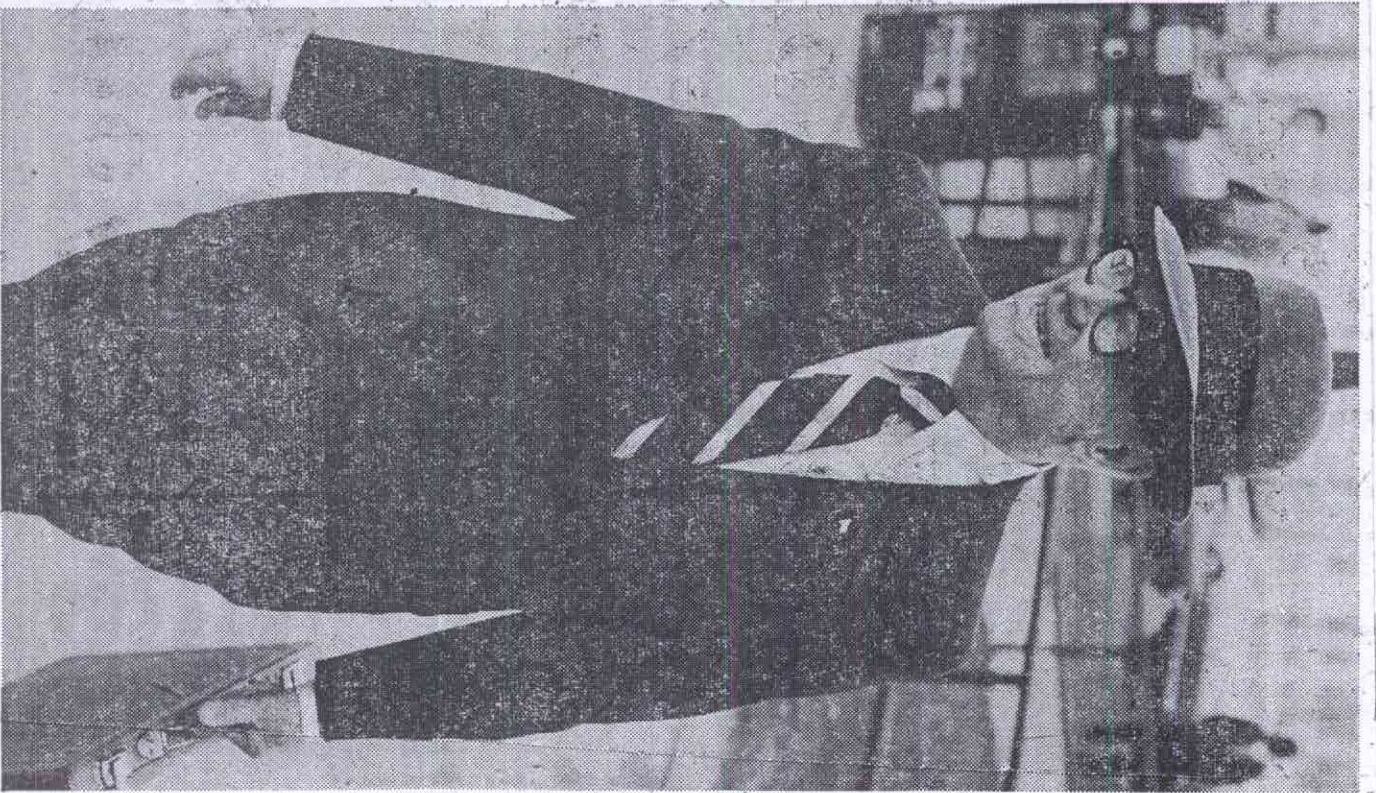
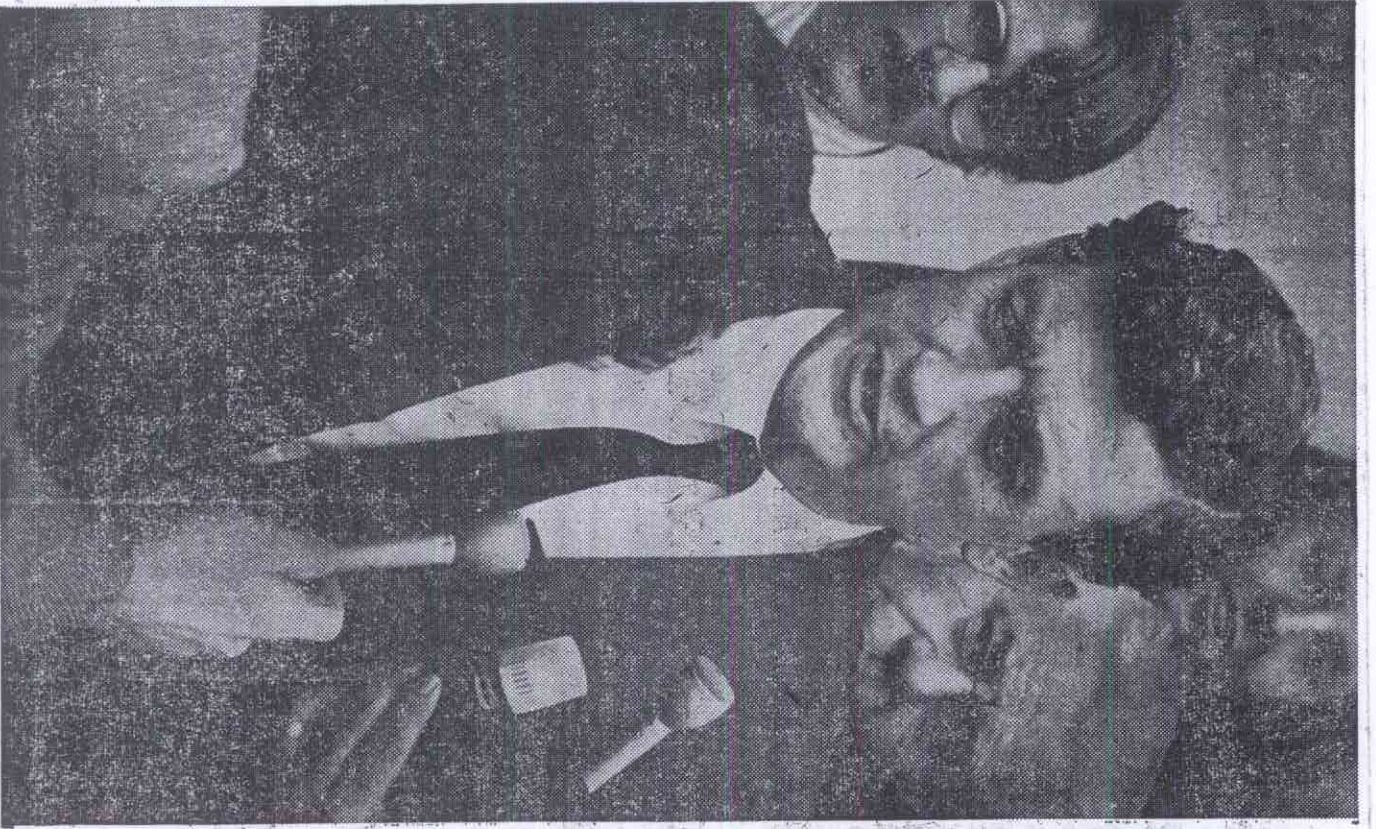
whether he would give the committee, which is considering his impeachment, any more material than Jaworski got.

"Those matters continue to be under discussion," he said, adding he would submit to an interview with a few committee members at the White House if his written answers do not satisfy them.

Mr. Nixon said he already has given Jaworski 19 tape recordings and "more than 700 documents," and that Jaworski had indicated that was all he needed to conclude his grand jury investigation of the bugging scandal.

But Jaworski has said he has not

See PRESIDENT, A18, Col. 5



After Sirica hearing, Judiciary Committee chief counsel Doar, left, answers questions, Farlier, defense attorney Wilson, right, enters courthouse.

Photos by Marraret Thomas and James K. W. Albarton—The Washington Post

Nixon: Rejected Hush-Money Plan

PRESIDENT, From A1
received all the material requested from the White House. No decision has been made, according to the prosecutor's office, about whether to subpoena that added material.

Asked whether he was prepared to pay for his own lawyers and whether he had chosen those lawyers in the event he is tried for impeachment, Mr. Nixon replied:

"If the Attorney General rules that I have to pay for my own defense, I will do so. But I am not a defendant" now.

If he does become a defendant and it is ruled that he must finance his own defense, Mr. Nixon said, he would do so. . . . "I'll find somebody to loan me the money."

Mr. Nixon also said he did not think the Watergate scandals would affect Re-

publican fortunes in off-year congressional elections. He said that two years after Dwight D. Eisenhower's second-term victory, the Republicans lost 47 house seats in the off-year elections because of a recession.

Following Lyndon B. Johnson's landslide victory in 1964, his Democratic Party lost 47 seats because of the Vietnam war, Mr. Nixon said.

"We are not going to have a war and not going to have a recession," he said, predicting that Republicans would fare better in November.

Mr. Nixon said he would not give the House Judiciary Committee everything it seeks for its impeachment inquiry because "that would delay it, in my opinion."

"If all was involved is carting everything in the White House to the committee and have them paw through it, it would take them

months and perhaps even a year," he said.

Asked if the though perjury, conspiracy and obstruction of justice—charges on which seven of his former aides were indicted Friday—would be impeachable offenses if applied to him, Mr. Nixon replied with a quip:

"I've also quit beating my wife."

But he quickly added that such offenses are "serious crimes" and would be considered impeachable offenses under the Constitution.

"But I don't expect the House committee will find the President guilty of any of the crimes to which you referred," Mr. Nixon said.

At his second nationally broadcast news conference in nine days, the President again urged action on other energy legislation, saying the administration wants action to increase supplies.

"I believe the way to get

the price of gasoline down is to produce more," Mr. Nixon said.

He said steps to increase energy supplies should include deregulation of natural gas prices, an easing of environmental laws that restrict coal production, exploration for oil on federal lands now held as naval reserves, and reorganization of energy agencies.

He urged Congress to move swiftly on his proposals for deregulating natural gas, to go forward "with various proposals we have made for organization in the energy field."

Timing of the news conference was a surprise. Mr. Nixon's last session with reporters was Feb. 25, and rarely during his five years in office has he held two news conferences so close together. Last fall, however, he conducted four news conferences in a two-month period.