

Nixon Admits

Withholding

Evidence

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Nixon admitted Monday that he withheld Watergate evidence from Congress and his own lawyers. The new evidence that Nixon made public shows that he authorized an attempt to thwart an FBI Watergate investigation.

Nixon also acknowledged that his impeachment by the House is "virtually a foregone conclusion" and that he will stand trial in the Senate.

Referring to his failure to turn over the evidence, Nixon said it was a "serious act of omission for which I take full responsibility and which I deeply regret."

Nixon's statement and the disclosure of three new transcripts evoked strong negative reactions and calls for resignation or impeachment from members of Congress, including some of those hitherto most steadfast in the President's defense.

One transcript shows that within a week after the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in, Nixon okayed a plan by his top aide to use the Central Intelligence Agency to blunt the FBI's investigation.

The transcript also shows that White House chief of staff H.R. Haldeman then told Nixon that his campaign director, John N. Mitchell, may have had some general prior knowl-

edge of the wiretapping and break-in.

He said Mitchell and White House Counsel John W. Dean III had suggested getting top CIA officials to tell acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray III to "Stay the hell out of this." Nixon concurred.

The latest developments were surrounded by strong reaction's from defenders of the President.

—Rep. Charles Wiggins, R-Calif., who led the President's defense on the House Judiciary Committee, called for Nixon's resignation.

—Rep. Wiley Mayne, R-Iowa, another supporter on the committee, said he is reversing his previous position and also will vote for impeachment.

—Sen. Robert P. Griffin, R-Mich., the Republican whip in the Senate, called for Nixon to resign. Griffin made his statement before Nixon revealed the latest transcript.

—Vice President Gerald R. Ford, previously a vocal advocate of the President's innocence, said he would no longer discuss impeachment in public "until the facts are more fully available."

—House GOP minority leader, John J. Rhodes of Arizona, said "The apparent attempt to use the CIA to cover up the

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Ordered A Halt To FBI Inquiry

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depth of the Watergate conspiracy is shocking ... It seems to me this disclosure makes a quick House vote on impeachment an imperative, in the best interests of our country."

In a written statement, Nixon said the transcripts show that his efforts six days after the Watergate break-in to limit the FBI's investigation on grounds that CIA secrets might be compromised show "I was aware of the advantages this course of action would have with respect to limiting public exposure of involvement by persons connected with" his re-election committee.

The President said he did not tell his staff or lawyers about the content of taped conversation held on June 23, 1972, with Haldeman.

Nixon's Watergate lawyer, James D. St. Clair, met later with Senate Republican leaders and, emerging from the session, said he was "not prepared to discuss" the possibility that he may quit as a result of the President's failure to inform him of the additional evidence.

That evidence, according to Nixon's statement, is "at variance with certain of my previous statements."

He cited specifically his previous claim that efforts to restrict the FBI inquiry of the burglary at Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate were based solely on national security grounds.

Staunch Defenders Favor Impeachment

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Nixon's disclosure Monday that he withheld tapes damaging to his case from his lawyers and the American people prompted some of his strongest defenders on the House Judiciary Committee to call for his impeachment.

Rep. Charles Wiggins, R-Calif., who led the anti-impeachment bloc during the recent nationally broadcast committee hearings called on Nixon to resign and said, if the President doesn't, he would vote to impeach him for obstruction of justice.

"With great reluctance and deep personal sorrow, I am prepared to conclude that the magnificent career of public service of Richard Nixon must be terminated involuntarily," Wiggins said.

Wiggins made the statement after being told that Nixon had acknowledged in a statement released at the White House that tapes of three conversations he had on June 23, 1972, with H.R. Haldeman would show that he did have political considerations in mind when he ordered the FBI to coordinate its investigation of the Water-

gate break-in with the Central Intelligence Agency.

The Nixon statement and release of the damaging transcripts came only hours after Senate Republican Whip Robert Griffin had called for the president's resignation.

Rep. Wiley Mayne, R-Iowa, a Judiciary Committee member who voted against impeachment said he now will vote for it.

"The President has today admitted deceiving the American people, the Judiciary Committee and his own lawyers," Mayne said in a statement.

Among other committee members, Rep. Charles Sandman, R-N.J., said Nixon's action was "possible obstruction of justice — no question about it. That, of course, is an impeachable offense."

And Rep. Delbert L. Latta, R-Ohio, said, "We're going to have to do some rethinking. This was evidence that was withheld from us."

Wiggins, Sandman and Latta voted against all proposed articles of impeachment on the ground that sufficient evidence of direct presidential involvement in wrongdoing was lacking.