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Connally Advisor On Watergate?

By Patrick J. Sloyan
Examiner Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A former aide to Vice President Agnew says that if White House advisers are to be believed, it was John Connally and not Agnew who was advising President Nixon on Watergate matters last year.

"Remember how the White House staff was saying that Agnew was out in the cold?" said Vic Gold, Agnew's former press secretary. "The White House staff was saying that it was Connally who was Nixon's confidant; it was Connally who was coming up with all the advice.

"We (Agnew) didn't have any input on the Watergate to the White House," Gold said. "Nobody was asking us for our advice or ideas."

Gold was discussing the impact of the Watergate affair on Agnew after the vice president's denial yesterday of news accounts about his reaction to the matter based on "unnamed associates and advisers."

Full Confidence

"Whenever I have something to say, I will say it directly — just as I am doing now," Agnew told a news conference at which he refused to answer reporters'

questions.

"I want to make it very clear that I have full confidence in the integrity of President Nixon and his determination and ability to resolve the Watergate matter to the full satisfaction of the American people," Agnew said.

There have been a spate of news accounts noting that while the emerging scandal would hurt Nixon, any presidential hopes Agnew would have in 1976 could be tainted by developments.

Some news reports say advisers have told Agnew he would have to dissociate himself from the Watergate affair to keep alive his chances for the presidency.

Never Linked

Gold, who was Agnew's press spokesman during the Watergate arrests and throughout the 1972 election, contends Agnew will never be linked to the episode.

Earlier this week, Gold wrote in the New York Times that Nixon should have known about the Watergate matter and cannot simply blame his White House staff.

Connally, Nixon's former Democratic Secretary of the Treasury, has been mentioned as a possible contender along with Agnew for the GOP presidential nomination.

Despite reports from White House officials that Connally planned to officially join the GOP, he has apparently postponed those plans in light of Watergate developments.

Wild Guess

During last year's campaign, Agnew said that his "wild Guess" was that "someone actually entrapped members of the presidential reelection campaign committee — a staged provocation.

At the time, Agnew discounted the Watergate break-in, contending the Nixon campaign could find nothing of value in Democratic headquarters.