

# Ehrlichman Is Less Optimistic on Nixon

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By Gregg Herrington  
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SEATTLE, Jan. 15 (AP)—John Ehrlichman says President Nixon has “a longer distance to travel now” than he did five months ago in his efforts to win back Americans’ support.

Ehrlichman, the President’s former chief domestic adviser, is more subdued than he was during the summer about Mr. Nixon’s prospects for restoring public confidence in the scandal-ridden administration.

It was last August, shortly after Ehrlichman finished his testimony before the Senate Watergate committee and moved back to the old family home on Lake Washington that he said of the scandals:

“My sense of it is that the effect on the presidency is short-ranged.” He also said he expected Mr. Nixon to display a fresh “force and vitality” to the office. . . . There’s a resiliency to the presidency that I think will be felt rather soon.”

On Monday, Ehrlichman and his wife Jeanne sat in their home and answered questions on several topics in a two-hour interview with The Associated Press.

Asked whether he felt differently now than he did in August and whether he still feels the administration will overcome the impact of Watergate, Ehrlichman replied:

“I think it could have at that time,” he answered. But “I think there have been some intervening and superseding events that have made it now more difficult. But I still think it can be done.

“I’m not willing to write off the ability of the White House to regain motion and initiative and dynamism again over the period of the next couple of years.”

The 48-year-old Ehrlichman, who was a zoning lawyer in Seattle before joining Mr. Nixon in 1968, recalled the “massive outpouring of opposition to the President” because of U.S. involvement in the Southeast Asian war in 1969-70.

But in the following months, “on into and through the election, he was really rolling legislatively and, obviously, politically,” he said.

Ehrlichman recently organized himself and three associates, whom he refused to name, into something called the Land Use Group. It is intended as a professional service for advising realtors and land developers on how to comply with environmental protection laws.

Ehrlichman was in Washington, D.C., last week, where he met with Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski. But, he said, a Los Angeles Times story that Jaworski offered him a deal in return for cooperation in testifying against other was incorrect.

Ehrlichman said on the Washington trip last week that he looked at his old White House files, but was not allowed to make copies or take notes. Mr. Nixon was in California at the time.

Despite the President’s troubles, Ehrlichman has plenty of his own, including

criminal charges facing him in Los Angeles in connection with the burglary of Daniel Ellsberg’s psychiatrist’s office, possible indictments in Washington by Jaworski, and, he said, 10 civil suits against him.

“There’s a trust fund that’s been created,” Ehrlichman

said in response to a question about a legal defense fund friends have set up to help defray his expenses. “Some people have come forward in order to help out. Up to this point there has been no active solicitation but there have been some voluntary contributions.”



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Ehrlichman more subdued now than in this 1973 photo.

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