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Nixon Reported to Offer To Return the Pardon

NEW YORK, Sept. 29 (AP) —Time magazine says former President Nixon called President Ford and offered to return the pardon the chief executive had granted him. Mr. Ford declined the offer, Time says.

Time reported today, in a column by Washington Bureau Chief Hugh Sidney in the magazine's upcoming issue, that Mr. Nixon made the call to Mr. Ford two weeks ago after the pardon touched off storm of controversy.

"Nixon said that he was sorry for all the trouble the pardon had caused," Sidey writes. "Then he offered to send the pardon back if it would help. No, said Ford, he

did not want that. He told the ex-President to stand firm. It would blow over."

On Sept. 8, a month after Mr. Nixon's resignation, Mr. Ford pardoned his predecessor for any crimes he may have committed against the United States while in the White House. Sidney says Mr. Ford took the action in the belief that "the nation's problems needed attention, but they would not have it if everyone was preoccupied with the pardon and the (Watergate) tapes."

Sidey says Mr. Ford told Mr. Nixon "he thought his decision was the right one. He still feels that way."