

Saxbe Tells of Pressure From White House Aides

Washington

Attorney General William B. Saxbe said yesterday that White House aides to Richard M. Nixon repeatedly pressured him to interfere with the Watergate prosecution.

"There were all kinds of suggestions that we interfere with (prosecutor Leon) Jaworski, that we do this and we do that," Saxbe said. "They came pretty thick and fast at first."

But Saxbe said "we were able to dodge those bullets." He said he told President Nixon's aides, "no way," despite their "implied" threat that Saxbe's job might be at stake.

In an interview as he prepared to leave after a year as head of the Justice Department, Saxbe said the pressure was relayed in the form of outrage at what the

then President considered an invasion of executive privilege protecting presidential records from disclosure.

Saxbe, who has been named ambassador to India, said he looked into some of the complaints from Nixon aides but ultimately rebuffed all of the attempts at pressure.

On another subject, Saxbe called for a high-level inquiry to determine whether the nation gets its money's worth from the Central Intelligence Agency and other government spy operations.

President Ford and Congress should launch a wide-ranging joint investigation focusing on the effectiveness of all intelligence agencies rather than on recent charges that the CIA has conducted illegal domes-

tic operations, Saxbe suggested.

Saxby, who was appointed attorney general by Mr. Nixon, said Nixon advisers urged him at one point to provide Justice Department lawyers for Mr. Nixon's defense.

He said the aides urged him to undertake "the active defense of the President."

Saxbe said he rejected that idea and set out to change the procedure by which some junior Justice Department lawyers had been loaned to the White House to help with Mr. Nixon's defense.

"I never felt the personnel should come from the Justice Department and gradually we phased it out so there was no one over there on the department payroll," he said.

Saxbe said the pressure came from persons who were not involved in the Watergate affair, but he declined to name names.

"Most of the people who talked to me were genuinely and thoroughly of the belief that Mr. Nixon was being martyred, that he wasn't guilty of those things charged," Saxbe said. "I'm sure he was telling them almost day by day that 'this is a terrible thing that is happening to me, that it's destroying the presidency.'"

Saxbe said he was told "to convey this message to Jaworski and . . . put a stop to this type of activity."

Asked his response to the White House entreaties, Saxbe replied, "On some of the (expressions of) outrage, I would say 'Well, I'll look into it.' I did and I felt that the prosecutor was justified. On some of the other things that required a more active measure, I just told them I wasn't going to do it."

Asked if the pressure focused on Mr. Nixon's ultimately futile effort to withhold the White House tapes, Saxbe replied: "Not necessarily." But he said most of the complaints turned on Mr. Nixon's claim of executive privilege.

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