

Business As Usual At the White House

by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

Twice during his closed-door meetings with Republican congressional leaders last week President Nixon performed in a way that raised fresh doubts about his understanding of the real impact of Watergate.

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The impression that the deeper implications of Watergate have not yet penetrated the presidential psyche, moreover, was strengthened when Mr. Nixon made a frankly political pitch just before the end of the White House session.

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Mr. Nixon's message was clear: get out and tell the voters not to forget what I have done for them in the past [ending the war, China, detente with Moscow]; don't let this Watergate thing block their view of the real Nixon administration.

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Not everything Mr. Nixon is doing these days fits that pattern of scaling down Watergate to diminutive political size. For example, the President suddenly and uncharacteristically canceled a full day of work and appointments at Key Biscayne last Saturday and flew to the Bahaman island of his friend Robert Abplanalp, apparently desperate for escape.

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Secret Service helicopter crashes off Grand Cay, 26 May 73, 10.10 p.m., filed Nix Ad.