

WATERGATE

Nixon broke vow --Percy

Chicago Sun-Times

CHICAGO — Sen. Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.) charges that President Nixon's refusal to give further tapes and documents to Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski breaks a personal pledge made to Percy on behalf of President Nixon.

Percy said Nixon's chief of staff, Alexander M. Haig Jr., made an "absolute commitment" to him at a White House meeting several months ago that no such information cutoff would occur.

Moreover, Percy said in a private meeting with political reporters here yesterday that Haig assured him he was speaking in the name of Nixon, who was standing a few feet away talking to a Senate colleague of Percy's.

Percy said he considers Nixon's action Thursday to be "almost equivalent" to

defying a court order or a House subpoena of further tapes on documents. Such defiance, he asserted, would constitute a "high crime" that "ensures impeachment."

Clearly angered by Nixon's action, Percy said he will renew his proposal to establish by statute Jaworski's post of special prosecutor.

Should Nixon then refuse another request for more tapes and documents by the special prosecutor, Percy said, the action might also constitute an impeachable "high crime."

Percy, who announced Friday he would enter presidential primaries in 1976, said he was "shocked" by Nixon's action.

Percy rejected outright the notion that Nixon has any right to cut off the flow of relevant information to Jaworski or the House Judiciary Committee which is considering an impeachment resolution, on grounds of "national security."

In his conversation with Haig several months ago in the White House, Percy said:

"I told him — with the President in the room a few feet away — that we needed a commitment that anything the special prosecutor asks for he can get . . . I asked for an absolute commitment that any bit of evidence would be given," Percy said.

Percy said Haig gave the commitment.