

# Nixon Defense Fund for Aides Is Denied

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WASHINGTON, June 7 — A White House spokesman said today that President Nixon had "expressed a willingness" to help two close former aides, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, meet their Watergate-related legal expenses. But that the President had never provided any such help.

Gerald L. Warren, the deputy White House press secretary, was responding to questions about a report of a secret \$400,000 fund, allegedly controlled by Mr. Nixon's close friend C. G. Rebozo, from which money for the legal defense of Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman could be made available.

Mr. Warren, declared at a regular news briefing today that "there is not now nor was there ever any defense fund set up by the President or any of his friends."

Mr. Warren did say that about a year ago, after Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman left the White House, the President "did express his deep personal concern that their sole significant source of income was being closed off at a time when they were facing enormous legal fees."

"In a natural and human way," Mr. Warren continued, the President "expressed a willingness to assist them in whatever way possible."

Mr. Warren said he did not know if Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman had arranged for any defense fund but reiterated that the President had not helped create any secret fund or any other kind of fund for the two men.

When asked if this meant that the President had never done anything about his expression of willingness to assist his two former aides meet their legal expenses, Mr. Warren replied, "That's right."

Mr. Warren later explained that the President had not been making any promises of financial aid but was expressing his personal concern about the problem being faced by his former assistants.

Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman have both been indicted in the Watergate cover-up case, and Mr. Ehrlichman has also been indicted in the case of the burglary of the office of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's former psychiatrist.

According to newspaper reports today, a former aide to Mr. Haldeman, Lawrence M. Higby, told the Senate Watergate committee in secret testimony that Mr. Haldeman had spoken to him of a \$400,000 secret defense fund controlled by Mr. Rebozo.

Mr. Higby reportedly told the committee that Mr. Haldeman, former White House chief of staff, had said he was informed of the availability of such a fund by Mr. Nixon on April 30, 1973, the day the President announced the resignation of Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman, the President's chief domestic affair adviser.

Efforts to reach Mr. Higby by telephone today were unsuccessful.

Today, after denying the existence of a secret defense fund, Mr. Warren charged that the story was the result of "another calculated leak from the [Senate] Watergate committee.

"We view it as the latest in a series of leaks designed to be politically damaging to the President of the United States and his former aides," he added.

"This leakage is designed to injure the President, and we question why this pattern has endured over the months despite promises by the chief counsel of the majority staff

on the committee to stop such leaks," Mr. Warren said.

The chief counsel for the committee, Samuel Dash, said, when asked about Mr. Warren's charges, that he, too had found leaks from the committee to be "deplorable" and had been trying unsuccessfully to stop them. He also said that leaks on Watergate matters had come out of the White House, too.

The edited transcripts of the Watergate tapes released by the President show that Mr. Nixon discussed the economic futures of Mr. Ehrlichman and Mr. Haldeman, should they have to leave the White House in a conversation with the two men on April 17, 1973.

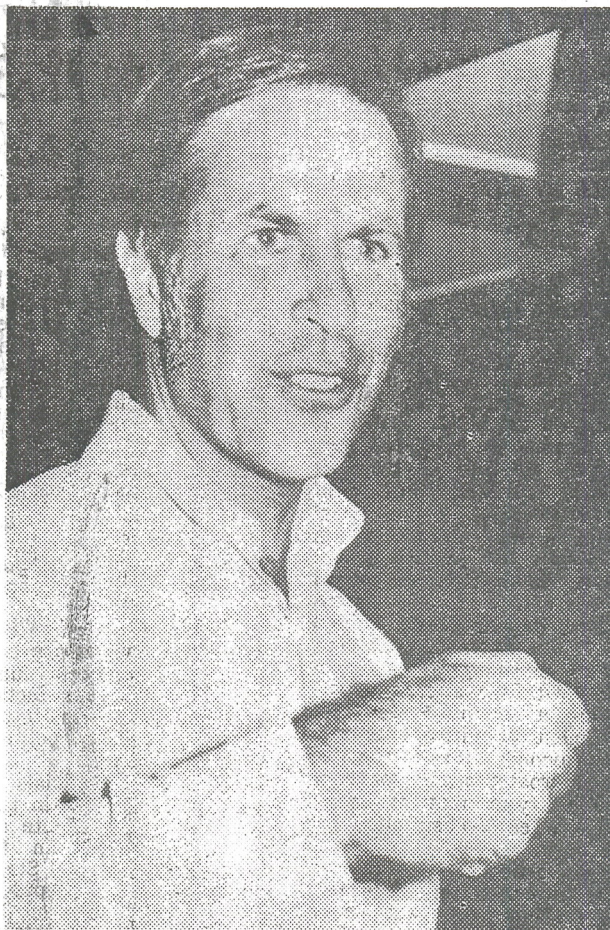
Mr. Nixon suggested that the two men go to work for the Richard M. Nixon Foundation, a private organization, at least part time, to help earn money.

Mr. Warren, when asked about the passage today, said that the foundation had not employed the two men and had no plans to do so as far as he knew.

Mr. Ehrlichman, interviewed by reporters outside the Federal Courthouse, denied that the President had ever offered to help find money for legal expenses. He said he had been receiving funds from a small defense fund that some people had contributed to.

Mr. Haldeman's attorney, John J. Wilson, said in a telephone interview today that he did not know what kind of financial resources Mr. Haldeman had available for his defense and added that he would not answer any question about the size of his fee.

"I have said that I want my fees to come from personal funds or from a trust fund set up for Mr. Haldeman," Mr. Wilson added. He also said that he certainly had not received any money from any White House fund.



Associated Press  
H. R. Haldeman, former White House chief of staff, talking to newsmen outside Los Angeles home yesterday.