

Testimony Contradicts Accounts on Haig Role

By PHILIP SHABECOFF
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WASHINGTON, Oct. 17 — President Ford's testimony to the House Judiciary subcommittee today contradicted newspaper accounts of the role of Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. and Secretary of State Kissinger in the decision to pardon Richard M. Nixon.

Mr. Ford's testimony also seemed to conflict with statements by his own counsel about the events leading up to the pardon as well as with several other accounts of the pardon process.

Last month The New York Times and The Washington Post carried dispatches saying that reports about the state of Mr. Nixon's physical and emotional health, made by former members of the Nixon staff now serving Mr. Ford, had contributed to the decision to pardon the former President.

The Times published an article from California saying that General Haig had persuaded Mr. Ford to issue the pardon after being advised about the "alarming state" of Mr. Nixon's health.

Today, however, Mr. Ford said he had received neither such reports from General Haig nor any recommendations with regard to a pardon from his and Mr. Nixon's former chief of staff.

When asked by Representative Lawrence Hogan, Republican of Maryland, about reports that Mr. Kissinger allegedly told the President that he feared Mr. Nixon might commit suicide, Mr. Ford replied, "There is no truth to it whatsoever."

Appears Surprised

Mr. Ford appeared to have been somewhat surprised and even shocked by the question.

Mr. Hogan said that the article about Mr. Kissinger and the fear of suicide had been carried in The New York Times and in The Washington Post on two occasions. In fact, the only reference to this story seems to have appeared on a column by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, which is carried by The Washington Post and other newspaper on Sept. 9.

A Judiciary Committee staff report, which mentioned that column, carried footnotes referring to other articles in The New York Times and Washington Post, but those articles did not say anything about the suicide report.

President Ford's disclosure today that on Aug. 1 General Haig reviewed with him a number of "options," including a pardon for Mr. Nixon, seemed to conflict with a statement made by Philip W. Buchen, White House counsel, at a news briefing on Sept. 10.

At that time, according to the article carried by this newspaper, Mr. Buchen insisted that there had been a discussion about a possible pardon between either Mr. Ford or Mr. Nixon or any member of their staffs prior to Mr. Nixon's resignation on Aug. 9.

Mr. Ford's statement that he had asked no conditions of former President Nixon when granting the pardon also conflicted with previous reports. On Sept. 10, this newspaper carried a dispatch from San Clemente quoting reliable sources as saying that Mr. Nixon "successfully beat back" efforts by President Ford's lawyers to obtain what the former President regarded as "a public confession of criminal guilt."

On Sept. 12, a United Press International dispatch quoted David Eisenhower, Mr. Nixon's son-in-law, as saying that President Ford had sought "some kind of confession" before deciding to grant the pardon.

In a speech by then Vice President Ford in New Orleans on Aug. 3, Mr. Ford said that he continued to believe that Mr. Nixon was not guilty of any "impeachable offenses."

In his testimony today, President Ford acknowledged that such statements, made between his Aug. 1 talk with General Haig and Mr. Nixon's resignation a week later, were deliberate falsehoods.

Mr. Ford explained that he feared "any change from my stated views, or even refusal to comment further would lead in the press to conclusions that I now wanted to see the President resign to avoid an impeachment vote in the House and probably conviction vote in the Senate."

Concrete Frog Is Stolen

SAN ANTONIO, Tex. (AP)—Thomas Leonhardt is looking for his frog. He told police that someone stole it from in front of his home. The frog is valued at \$15, weighs 50 pounds and is made of concrete.



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President Ford being greeted by Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, yesterday. William L. Hungate is chairman of the subcommittee, before which Mr. Ford appeared.

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