

What Nixon Really Meant on Energy

Washington

President Nixon's promise to "break the back of the energy crisis" in 1974 did not mean what it sounded like, John C. Sawhill, deputy administrator of the Federal Energy Office, said yesterday.

Asked whether the nation could, in fact, "break the back of the energy crisis" this year, Sawhill said, "No," and explained that shortages of distillate and residual fuel oils — and maybe even gasoline — will continue for two or three years because of a shortage of refinery capacity.

Sawhill told newsmen that Mr. Nixon meant only that the U.S. could "get started in 1974" toward a solution of its energy problems.

Sawhill's boss, energy chief William E. Simon, was later asked the same question about breaking the energy crisis in 1974, and replied, "Well, we're going to put the policies into place that will start breaking it."

Sawhill also said Mr. Nixon did not necessarily mean the U.S. will supply all of its own energy by 1980.

In Wednesday's State of the Union message, the Presidential promised energy self-sufficiency by the end of the decade.

Sawhill said the real goal by 1980 is to "demonstrate to the world that we can be self-sufficient," although the U.S. probably will still have to import some oil.

Associated Press