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Nixon Denies Favors to ITT, Backs Nominee

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — President Nixon gave a public vote of confidence to Attorney General designate Richard G. Kleindienst today and declared that his Administration would never accept a campaign contribution with the "expressed or implied" understanding of a return favor.

Speaking out for the first

time since the ITT controversy burst wide open more than three weeks ago, the President categorically denied the Administration had given any favors to International Telephone and Telegraph Corp.

In fact, he told reporters during an impromptu news conference in his White House office, the Justice Department had moved more forcefully against the conglomerate during his Administration than under Democratic Presidents Kennedy or Johnson.

"If we wanted to do a favor for ITT, we could have continued to do what was done in the previous administrations, which is nothing," Nixon said.

Kleindienst's nomination

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Nixon Denies ITT Favors

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to succeed John Mitchell as Attorney General has been delayed for weeks by a Senate investigation into suggestions of a connection between the Justice Department's out-of-court settlement of an anti-trust suit against ITT last July and ITT's offer to help finance the 1972 Republican national convention in San Diego.

The suggestion was contained in a confidential memorandum published by syndicated columnist Jack Anderson and attributed to Mrs. Dita D. Beard, ITT's Washington lobbyist.

Dismissing Anderson's allegations, the President said Kleindienst should be promptly confirmed by the Senate for the post Mitchell quit last March 1 to direct Nixon's re-election campaign.

"I had confidence when I appointed him (Kleindienst) that he was qualified," Nixon said. "I still have that confidence. I believe he should be confirmed. I believe he will be confirmed."

As for ITT's guarantee to underwrite GOP convention costs in San Diego next August, the President said: "Nobody gets anything back for contributions in this Administration."

He said political contributions "must be accepted with no understanding, expressed or implied, for something in return."

Nixon said the out-of-court settlement of the ITT case required the firm to divest itself of about \$1 billion worth of subsidiaries as a condition for acquiring the Hartford Fire Insurance Co.

"ITT became the giant conglomerate that it was in the two previous administrations," Nixon said "It grew and it grew and nothing was done to stop it."

Nixon also noted that

Kleindienst himself had requested that the Senate hearings on his nomination be reopened to examine the ITT controversy and remove a cloud over his reputation. Nixon said he was confident there would be no such cloud when Kleindienst takes office.

Nixon was asked about the role of White House aide Peter Flanigan in the anti-trust settlement and what the proper role of presidential staffers should be in such cases.

A presidential aide "must listen to all those who come to the White House" on all sides of all issues, Nixon responded: "What is improper is for a presidential aide to use his influence for personal gain" or to use his influence in a way not in the public interest."

As for Flanigan, Nixon referred to press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler's earlier statement that Flanigan still had the President's full confidence.