

Won't Halt North Viet Bombs--Nixon

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WASHINGTON — (UPI) — President Nixon today ruled out any halt to the bombing of North Vietnam before the Nov. 7 election, saying former President Johnson made a "very, very great mistake" when he did that just before the 1968 election.

Nixon told a news conference in his oval office that the war could be settled before Nov. 7 — if the right kind of settlement could be made — but he said election "will not in any way influence what we do at the negotiating table."

The Johnson Administration, he said, though well intentioned, "made a very, very great mistake in stopping the bombing without adequate agreements from the other side."

He referred to Johnson's Nov. 1, 1968, announcement of a bombing halt just days before Nixon defeated Hubert Humphrey for the Presidency.

"We are not going to make that mistake now," Nixon declared.

In other highlights of the 40-minute news conference, which was not televised, Nixon:

- Insisted the 400-million bushel wheat sale to the Soviet Union was a good deal

for the United States although he conceded the Russians needed the grain badly.

- Said the Watergate bugging case was being thoroughly investigated by the FBI and said he would not comment on it because of criminal charges pending against several men who have already been indicted.

- Repeated his pledge to propose property tax relief, but said it would not include an increase in other taxes — thus ruling out a widely discussed value added tax. Nixon said the relief would be provided in stages and would be aimed primarily at the elderly.

Most of the news conference dealt with the campaign.

Asked about the charge by Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern that his administration is riddled with corruption, Nixon

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on predicted that would "turn off" the voters.

Nixon took note of McGovern's corruption charges and accusations that U.S. policy in Vietnam was "the worst crime since the Nazi extermination of the Jews."

"Some of my more partisan supporters have said I should respond in kind," Nixon said. "But I'm not going to dignify such comments with a reply."

McGovern has been hitting daily on the corruption theme this week, saying the Nixon Administration was

the most corrupt in the nation's history.

Nixon said he would not characterize McGovern as conducting a "smear" campaign but he noted that "one of the few members of Congress who is publicly and actively supporting the opposition" had criticized McGovern's campaign tactics. Nixon referred to Rep. Jerome Waldie (D-Antioch).

"The public will be turned off by this kind of campaigning," Nixon said.

Nixon has not yet publicly mentioned McGovern's name during the campaign — and he didn't again today.