

# Nixon Brushes Off Corruption Charge

## He Reviews Domestic, Viet Issues

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Washington

President Nixon told a news conference yesterday that he would not reply to Senator George McGovern's charges of corruption in his administration because he believes responsible persons would be "turned off" by the sharp attacks.

Summoning newsmen to a surprise conference in his office, the President vigorously defended administration efforts to investigate charges of corruption and emphasized his policy differences with McGovern on busing, defense, taxes, amnesty and other issues.

During a 40-minute session, the President calmly discussed his campaign prospects, ruled out a pre-election bombing halt in Vietnam unless there is an agreement and said that he must remain in Washington to fight against higher spending and taxes, as long as Congress is in session.

### PARIS

He said that the Vietnam negotiations are at a "sensitive" stage, but he declined to give any details or to predict success at Paris.

Mr. Nixon said the campaign will not influence "what we do at the negotiating table."

He mentioned "the possible negotiation of, or unilateral action with regard to, a bombing halt." Later he described as "a very, very great mistake" the unilateral bombing halt ordered by Lyndon Johnson in 1968 because it came without agreements from the other side.

"We are not going to make that mistake now," Mr. Nixon said. He referred to "very extensive" private

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negotiations but said both sides had agreed not to discuss their content.

### MOOD

The bulk of the press conference, the 28th since he entered the White House and the first since August 29, was on domestic and campaign issues. Mr. Nixon said he would like to campaign, chiefly to encourage his supporters to go to the polls, but he argued that duty required his presence in Washington.

He appeared to be relaxed and in good health, reasonably confident about victory in November but by no means complacent. Yet he seemed to want to remain above the battle to the extent possible.

The first question, on how he would defend himself against charges of corruption, seemed to be the one he wanted, perhaps the one he called the conference to answer.

### REPLY

The President, speaking in a very low voice, said he

had noted how he had been compared to Adolf Hitler, called the number one war-maker in the world and branded the most deceitful President in history.

But he said he did not intend to dignify the charges by answering them. He did say he had seen that a Democratic congressman who is supporting McGovern had "very vigorously" criticized the Democratic nominee for his campaign tactics.

Mr. Nixon was referring to Representative Jerome Waldie (Dem-Calif.), who earlier in the week, when asked if McGovern's corruption charge wasn't "getting into the gutter," replied: "Yes, it is."

Waldie added that he found "no comfort in a presidential campaign descending to that level."

While some of his partisan advisers urged him to reply in kind, "I shall not do so," the President said.

"I am not going to dignify such comments," he said.

Asked if he agreed with Vice President Agnew that the Democratic nominee is waging a smear campaign, the President said he would not "characterize" the senator's campaign or raise doubts about his motives.

When questioned regarding charges of scandal in the wheat agreement, the President asserted that a complete investigation was being made.

If any impropriety or illegality is found, he said, "we want to know it."

"The way to find out is to put the best investigative agency in the world to work at finding out," he said, referring to the fact that the

FBI is investigating the matter.

He then turned to charges that the wheat deal was a bad one for the United States, "that we got schnookered by the Russians." When he used that term this week in talking with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko, the President said, Gromyko asked for a translation.

Instead of being "schnookered," Mr. Nixon asserted that American farmers got \$1 billion more in income, thousands of jobs were created, taxpayers saved \$200 million in wheat storage payments and the nations balance of payments position was improved.

Claiming that he personally negotiated the final wheat agreement after "good preliminary work" by others, he said the Soviets originally wanted to pay for the purchases over ten years at 2 per cent interest and finally agreed to repay in three years at over 6 per cent.

### WATERGATE

When a reporter suggested that the President "make a clean breast about what you were trying to get done at the Watergate," Mr. Nixon said "one thing that has always puzzled me about it is why anybody would have tried to get anything out of Watergate."

He said that the FBI has assigned 133 agents to the investigation of the alleged bugging of the Democratic party headquarters at the Watergate Hotel, that indictments had been handed down and that the matter is before the courts.

He called the bugging attempt "reprehensible."

The President conceded that there could be a federal tax increase next year, but said it is unlikely and that, if there is one, it will not be a "presidential tax increase."

It will be "a Congressional tax increase," he said.

The danger of Congressional over spending he said, is "one of the reasons why it is important for me to stay on the job here in Washington" rather than go out in the country and campaign.

### CAMPAIGN

The President broke no new ground in discussing his campaign plans. He said that when Congress ad-

He announced that he would make the first of a series of radio speeches tomorrow evening. The problem for a candidate ahead in the polls, he said, is that "of getting his vote out." The candidate who is behind has little trouble getting all his supporters to the polls, he said.

He can make plans "to go into various parts of the country" but he gave no details. Meanwhile, he said he would limit travel to "perhaps once a week."