

Nixon Reveals Secret Land Sale

Associated Press

Washington

A wealthy friend of President Nixon owns most of the land at the President's retreat in San Clemente, the White House disclosed yesterday.

In a written statement, the White House said Robert Abplanalp, a New York industrialist, bought the property in an undisclosed transaction 2½ years ago.

Abplanalp earlier had loaned Mr. Nixon \$625,000 to help him buy the \$1.5 million estate in 1969, the White House said.

Mr. Nixon retained ownership of the San Clemente home close by his Western offices, and about one-quarter of the land around it.

The office building is owned by the government and located on a Coast Guard station. It is not involved in the transaction.



AP Wirephoto

ROBERT ABPLANALP
N.Y. industrialist

The entire 26-acre estate is surrounded by a single wall and guarded by government security men.

No White House spokesman was available immediately to answer questions about the statement. Later, in response to telephoned questions, the White House generally declined to elaborate on the statement.

Asked why no mention of the transaction had been made during the last 2½ years, a press spokesman said the statement at this time had been issued in response to recent news stories about the property.

Reached by radiotelephone in the Bahamas, Abplanalp would not discuss the land transaction except to say "what I heard on the radio is correct."

There is no indication Abplanalp has made any independent use of the portion of the property he now owns.

Abplanalp also owns one of the five houses in the compound Mr. Nixon uses at Key Biscayne, and an island in The Bahamas, which the

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President sometimes visits during his Florida stays.

According to the White House figures, Abplanalp purchased 77 per cent of the 26 acres in San Clemente for \$1,249,000.

That amount is equal to 77 per cent of what the entire parcel and improvements cost the Nixons. However, the portion the Nixons retained includes the family's Spanish mansion. Abplanalp's portion has no buildings.

LOAN

The White House said that Abplanalp loaned the Nixons \$625,000 to make down payments on the property. The total down payment on two separate transactions totaled \$420,000.

The status of the property since Mr. Nixon announced plans to acquire it in May, 1969, has been described only in vague documents.

On May 6 the Santa Ana

Register reported that some Senate investigators believed the mortgage had been paid off with leftover 1968 campaign funds.

The White House vehemently denied that story and said later that \$630,000 was still owed on the mortgage on the property. No such figure appeared in yesterday's statement.

Release of the statement had been delayed several times during the past ten days. White House spokesmen said the delay was due to the complexity of the matter.

DATE

The land transaction was completed on Dec. 15, 1970, the White House statement said.

The White House did not explain why the arrangement was not disclosed at that time.

The statement did reiterate what had been said in May, 1969: The Nixons wanted only 5.9 acres of the property, but were acquiring the larger parcel in order to assure themselves of a compatible neighbor.

Ostensibly because of the desire to sell part of the land, the property was put into a trust administered by Title Insurance and Trust Co. of Los Angeles, whose name appears in public records as the owner of record.

RECORD

Here is a recent history of the property based on White House statements of 1969 and yesterday, including what the White House says occurred 2½ years ago:

In July, 1969, Mr. Nixon purchased 23.1 acres of Southern California ocean-front property for \$1.4 million from heirs of an old-line California family.

He paid \$400,000 down and a \$1 million mortgage was executed to the sellers.

In September, 1969, Mr. Nixon purchased an adjoining 2.9 acres for \$100,000. He paid \$20,000 down and gave

an \$80,000 mortgage.

Thus, his down payments totaled \$420,000 and the mortgages totaled \$1,080,000 for a total cost of \$1.5 million.

Mr. Nixon borrowed from Abplanalp at 8 per cent interest "in order to provide temporary financing to meet the objective of the purchases," according to yesterday's statement. This borrowing exceeded his down payments by \$205,000.

From the time of purchase until the present, the Nixons have spent \$123,514 on property improvements. No breakdown of these improvements, the dates they were made or their location on the property was provided.

In December, 1970, Abplanalp, through an investment company he set up for the purpose of acquiring and holding the land, purchased 20.1 acres.

He paid \$1,249,000 in the following manner: he canceled the loans he had made the Nixons, still totaling \$625,000; he assumed the

\$64,000 balance remaining from the \$80,000 mortgage the Nixons had made in September, 1969; and he assumed \$560,000 of the \$900,000 balance remaining on the \$1 million mortgage. The Nixons gave the principal seller in July, 1969.

INTEREST

The Nixons apparently received no actual cash in the transaction. And they apparently separately paid to Abplanalp the approximately \$70,833 interest on the loan they held from him for 17 months. The figure does not appear in the statement, and was computed on the basis of the figures that were disclosed.

The transfer was accomplished by executing an assignment of interest in trust to Title Insurance and Trust Co. This was apparently not recorded at the Orange County Court House in Santa Ana.

By subtracting the price Abplanalp paid the Nixons from their \$1,623,514 cost and improvements, the White House arrived at a figure of \$374,514 for the Nixons' net investment in the 5.9 acres and residence.

Against this, however, Mr. Nixon owed as of Dec. 15, 1970, the remaining \$340,000

of the mortgage given to the original principal sellers.

The statement did not say how much of that balance he has paid off in the intervening 2½ years.

INVESTMENT

Mr. Nixon's actual cash investment in the property is \$34,514, plus whatever additional mortgage principal he has paid off since December 1970.

The statement does not discuss the present market value of the property. In addition to the normal rise in property values, the portion of the property containing the big residence would seemingly be worth proportionately more than the surrounding acreage.

County tax records divide the property into different parcels than Mr. Nixon and Abplanalp have split it. But making a conservative estimate based on the assessor's breakdown between land and building values, Mr. Nixon's remaining holding would seem to have been worth more than \$500,000 as of March 1, 1972. That's the latest date for which tax figures are available.