

White

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Denies It

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The White House flatly denied the allegation that President Nixon offered executive clemency or authorized anyone to offer executive clemency in the Watergate case.

The denials came after James W. McCord, one of the convicted Watergate burglars, told the Senate committee investigating Watergate that he had been told the President would grant him clemency after a brief term in prison.

When questioned about McCord's testimony, White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler asserted that the President "never made any offer of clemency" and never authorized anyone to offer clemency in the Watergate case.

Ziegler also repeated his earlier denial that Mr. Nixon participated in an attempted coverup.

STATEMENT

On May 7, the White House issued a statement declaring that any suggestion the President "authorized the offering of clemency to anyone" in the Watergate case is "false."

The press secretary, facing a barrage of questions, said that he would not respond to the testimony on Capitol Hill except to make the denials about the offer of clemency and to say that the testimony was "based on total hearsay."

When questioned about what were described as increasing suggestions that Mr. Nixon should resign, Ziegler denied that there were many such serious suggestions and made it

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clear he did not expect any such thing to happen.

"The President has a lot to do and a lot to accomplish in the second term and he fully intends to do that," Ziegler said in a further effort to indicate business almost as usual at the White House.

HEARING

Mr. Nixon did not watch the televised coverage of the Watergate hearing but received written summaries Ziegler reported for the second consecutive day.

Today the President and Mrs. Nixon will fly to the Naval air station at Norfolk, Va., and then go by helicopter to the aircraft carrier In-

dependence for ceremonies marking Armed Forces day. The President will speak from the carrier deck.

RESIGNATION

A reporter told Ziegler that former Democratic vice presidential candidate R. Sargent Shriver and Washington attorney Joseph A. Califano, former aide to President Johnson, had suggested the President should resign.

"I do not see a mounting point of view along this line at all," Ziegler said. Asserting that there were a number of achievements in the first term, Ziegler said "Let there be no question about it: The President intends to continue with this work and proceed on the basis of the 1972 election."

Asked if the President believes that the legitimacy of his election is in question as a result of the Watergate disclosure, Ziegler said there is no question regarding the expressions of the American people at the polls or the legitimacy of the election.

MEETING

Yesterday Mr. Nixon met with the Cabinet, and then met with other officials.

The Cabinet meeting was devoted to a discussion of efforts to carry forward the program in the domestic and foreign areas, the press secretary said.

There was no agenda at

the Cabinet meeting and the President went around the table soliciting views of members on problems they faced, the press secretary said.

Watergate was referred to, but Ziegler said it did not take up much time and was not the major focus of the meeting. Ziegler would provide no other details.

AGNEW

Later, Vice President Agnew said in an interview that "the Cabinet tried something new yesterday. It was not a structured meeting. The President told each member to bring the rest of the Cabinet up to date on what's going on in their departments."

"It was very successful and I found it extremely informative," the vice president said. "Instead of having an agenda with a presentation by one member, we had kind of a free-wheeling discussion."

Such unstructured meetings cannot be held every time, Agnew said. But the discussion "triggered comments" from other Cabinet members and "everyone went away with a very good feeling," he said.

"I think the President has decided, and indicated at previous Cabinet meetings, that he wanted to work more directly with Cabinet members," the vice president said.

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