

President's Bid to Restore Confidence

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 5—

President Nixon said today he hoped to restore confidence in his Administration, shaken by the Watergate disclosures, by not permitting his own confidence to be destroyed and by showing the country that he was "doing something." "What the President says will not restore it," Mr. Nixon told his televised news conference. "And what you ladies and gentlemen say certainly will not restore it." [Question 9, Page 26.]

But as his Administration moves on new initiatives in foreign and domestic policy, he said, "the people will be concerned about what the President does, and I think that will restore the confidence."

That, in fact, was the purpose of the news conference—to show that after months of seeming inertia and personnel shake-ups, the Nixon Administration was moving ahead to overcome problems of vital concern to people.

Having confronted many pointed questions on Watergate at his San Clemente news conference two weeks ago, he used a good portion of his 35 minutes before the cameras today to outline a new State of the Union Message he will send to Congress. And he knew from the wide diversity of reporters he recognized for questions that he would have a number of questions on policy—and he did, on taxes, the economy, the Middle East oil situation, the minimum wage bill he will veto.

The President, in fact, has been trying for some weeks, without much success, to show that his Administration is moving ahead on several policy

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fronts despite the disclosures of Watergate and related matters. But he plainly intends to keep trying.

Mr. Nixon defined his own problems in restoring confidence. First, he said: "How is it restored? Well, it's restored by the President not allowing his own confidence to be destroyed. That's the beginning."

That was his first public admission that he has been under a tremendous personal strain

as the Watergate case has dominated the news for the last six months. It was apparent, however, in a speech in New Orleans on Aug. 20 in which he stumbled over his words and seemed overly animated and restless. It was apparent before the speech in his shoving of Ronald L. Ziegler, his press secretary, and his insistence on keeping the press away from him.

In his news conference two weeks ago he was at times nervous, tense and defensive. But the consensus was that he helped himself by, for the first time, going before the public and answering all questions put to him on Watergate.

Pleased at Outcome

His aides were so pleased with the outcome that they immediately began urging him to hold another news conference in which Watergate would be less of a factor and the President could convey to the people what he was trying to do in running the Government.

Today's news conference was held in the East Room of the White House under a fully televised format that Mr. Nixon had not used since his first term. Rather than holding an impromptu conference, as he had done earlier this year and most of last, he announced the conference with more than four hours notice.

He was tanned from many hours in the sun and he wore heavy make-up. He seemed more at ease during most of the questioning than he had two weeks ago. But the nervousness and heavy breathing returned when he was asked about the financing of his San Clemente property [Question 3] and about his statement that he had ordered a thorough investigation of the Watergate burglary as soon as he found out about involvement of high White House officials. [Question 8.]

Critical of Media

His views of the news media were no less restrained. He spoke of commentators who "by innuendo, by leak, by, frankly, leers and sneers," had attacked the President "in every way." [Question 9.]

On the Federal investigation of Vice President Agnew's finances, Mr. Nixon said he would "not dignify" with an answer questions "with regard to the charges that have been made by innuendo and other-

wise against the Vice President." [Question 1.]

"It would be an infringement on his rights," he said.

And he was defensive on his homes in San Clemente and Key Biscayne, Fla., depicting himself as a man of little wealth who had been smeared by false accusations.

"I own no stocks and no

bonds," he said. "I think I am the first president in this office since Harry Truman, I don't own a stock or a bond. I sold everything before I came into office. All that I have are two pieces of property in Florida, which adjoin each other; the piece of property in San Clemente, with which you are familiar; and a house on Whittier Boulevard in which my mother once lived. I have no other property, and I owe money on all of them."

This underscored the intensity of the hurt that Mr. Nixon has felt, and apparently still retains, over the allegations that he considers unfair and intended to cripple his Presidency. The question remaining was whether his "own confidence" was sufficient to make the adjustments needed to put his Administration on a new footing.

The second step in restoring confidence, he said, is "by doing something."

"The country hasn't paid a great deal of attention to it. And I may say the media hasn't paid a great deal of attention to it; because your attention, quite understandably, is in the more fascinating area of Watergate," he said.

"But perhaps that will now change. Perhaps as we move in the foreign policy initiative now . . . and as we move on the domestic front, the people will be more concerned about what the President does. And I think that will restore the confidence."

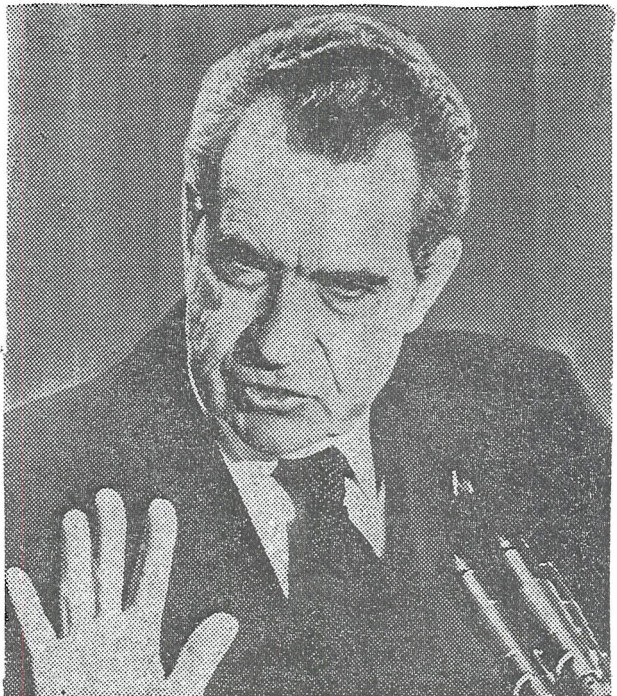
Here the President has a built-in difficulty — that the White House "game plan" for the second Nixon term has not been the initiation of broad new policy moves but the nurturing and implementation of those made in the first term.

Henry A. Kissinger, who has been nominated Secretary of State, has said that in foreign policy the main goal now is to institutionalize and protect the bold innovations made through

1972. On domestic policy, the But what they have said so far has made little impact. In the long run, what the President does, in the opinion of some observers here, may depend on his "own confidence" and ability to move his Administration, main White House initiatives have been to hold down Federal spending and inflation and to have Congress enact the remaining revenue-sharing proposals.

There has been no indication that the President is planning dramatic moves on the scale of opening relations with China or proposing a Family Assistance Plan that would thoroughly reform the welfare system. The Administration is planning some major changes in housing, possibly housing allowances instead of subsidizing construction, but over-all there is not much sign of initiatives that would overshadow the scandals.

The President has moved to open the White House to more public inquiry and his aides have been available for interviews as never before, even at the beginning of his first term.



Associated Press

President Nixon at his news conference in Washington