

NIXON SAYS HE CONSIDERED POLITICS IN MILK RISE BUT DENIES ANY DEAL; HE ALSO REJECTS CHARGES ON I.T.T.

TWO STATEMENTS

But Documentation to Support President's View Is Withheld

By JOHN HERBERS

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LAGUNA BEACH, Calif., Jan. 8—President Nixon acknowledged today that he took "traditional political consideration" into account in ordering a controversial 1971 increase in Federal milk price supports.

But he said that charges he granted favors to milk pro-

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ducers and the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation in return for campaign contributions were "utterly false."

The President's position was set forth in two White House statements that last November Mr. Nixon promised to make public to get out the "facts" on both cases. But documents supporting the statements were not made public on the ground that they previously were voluntarily delivered to the special Watergate prosecutor.

Knew Industry Plan

"In view of the fact that the documents and tapes are on file with the special prosecutor, it should be clear that the accounts published today are consistent with the basic facts contained in those documents and tapes," said a statement issued by the White House press office.

The statements disclosed for the first time that Mr. Nixon personally made the decision to accede to dairy industry requests to raise milk price supports in 1971 and that, when he made the decision, he knew of the industry's plans to contribute up to \$2-million to his re-election campaign.

The paper noted that the President was made aware of "the political power of the dairy industry lobby" before reaching his decision and that he had concluded "it could be politically disastrous in some of the Midwestern states" if the wishes of the lobby to raise milk price supports were not granted.

Orders to Kleindienst

On the matter of International Telephone and Telegraph, the President insisted that he had intervened in the Government's antitrust suits against the corporation solely because he believed the suits were based on a philosophy that he disagreed with—that is, that "bigness per se" is bad.

For this reason, the President said, he ordered the then Deputy Attorney General, Richard G. Kleindienst, on April 19, 1971, to instruct Richard W. McLaren, then Assistant Attorney General in charge of the

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Antitrust Division, that an appeal of one of the suits should not be filed in the Supreme Court.

Mr. Nixon labeled as "false" charges that his intervention had been related to an I.T.T. commitment, variously reported at \$100,000 to \$400,000, to help finance the Republican National Convention.

The President said that he had been unaware of that commitment, which he said was made "several weeks" after his intervention in the antitrust case.

Regarding the decision not to publish documents, the White House said that to do so would violate the President's intention to maintain the "confidentiality" of materials submitted to the Watergate prosecution.

However, because the documents were not made public, as White House spokesmen indicated a few weeks ago they would be, and because the statements released today were

subject to various interpretations, Mr. Nixon's latest move was not considered likely to end the controversy.

Further, the statements contain little information that has not been published. Rather, they interpret the facts from the President's point of view.

From the standpoint of documentation, Mr. Nixon's action today contrasted with his disclosure in early December of his personal finances, when he made public his income tax returns for his first four years in the Presidency and volumes of legal papers.

'Actions Totally Proper'

Mr. Nixon and his Administration have been accused of raising milk prices in 1971 in return for large campaign contributions from the milk interests and, of settling the I.T.T. case after the corporation made known its intention to help finance the 1972 Republican National Convention, then planned for San Diego.

The separate statements issued today on the two actions, the White House said, "support the President's previous statements that his actions were totally proper."

As to the milk supports, the White House said that the President's action had been based on several factors: "First and foremost, intensive Congressional pressure, generated in part by the dairy interests; sec-

only, the economic merits of the case itself; and finally, traditional political considerations relating to the needs of the farm states. The economic consequences of that milk decision show it to have been in the national interest."

However, the statement conceded that he knew of plans by the industry to contribute up to \$2-million for his re-election at the time he agreed to the request for a milk price rise.

As to the I.T.T. case, the White House said that the President interceded in antitrust action against the corporation in April, 1971, solely to avoid a Supreme Court ruling that would permit antitrust suits to be brought against large American companies simply on the basis of their size.

"The President was not aware at the time of any pledge by I.T.T. to make a contribution toward expenses of the Republican National Convention, nor, in fact, had such a pledge ever been made," the statement said. "The ultimate resolution of the I.T.T. matter—requiring I.T.T. to undergo the largest divestiture in antitrust history—was itself judged to be reasonable and fair by two former Solicitors General, Erwin Griswold and Archibald Cox."