

Nixon's Reaction

Washington

The White House adopted a business-as-usual stance with respect to the Watergate indictments yesterday, and President Nixon urged all Americans to remember that those indicted "are presumed innocent" until proven guilty.

He expressed the hope that the trials "will move quickly to a just conclusion" and reiterated his earlier statement that the place to settle the Watergate issue is in the courts.

For the most part, the

President hewed to a normal schedule, without disclosing his thoughts on the indictments of some of his oldest and closest associates.

He began the day with an hour-long meeting with his energy and economic advisers to discuss issues that could affect his future in office almost as much as Watergate.

Then he secluded himself in the Oval Office with Alexander M. Haig Jr., White House staff chief, and Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler to receive news of the court action.

A short time later, Deputy Press Secretary Gerald L. Warren walked glumly into the press room to face reporters alone.

The first question was about the seven indictments handed down in U.S. district court here only a short time earlier. Warren read the following statement:

"The President has always maintained that the judicial system is the proper forum for the resolution of the questions concerning Watergate.

"The indictments indicate

that the judicial process is finally moving toward resolution of the matter.

"It is the President's hope that the trials will move quickly to a just conclusion.

"The President is confident that all Americans will join him in recognizing that those indicted are presumed innocent unless proof of guilt is established in the courts."

When reporters began asking questions, Warren in the main referred them to his prepared statement.

He declined to say when it was prepared, but he did say that the President

to Indictments

learned of the indictments from the news wires and had no advance information.

When asked if the President still believes that John D. Ehrlichman and H. R. Haldeman, his two closest aides until they resigned under fire last April 30, were "two of the finest public servants it has been my privilege to know," Warren replied: "You have the statement."

When another reporter asked if the President still believes that Ehrlichman and Haldeman will be found innocent, he got the same

answer.

Asked if the White House has any information with respect to the sealed document the grand jury delivered to Judge John J. Sirica and which is believed to have information regarding the President, Warren replied: "None whatsoever."

After receiving the news from the Watergate grand jury, Mr. Nixon held two meetings where photographers normally would have been admitted briefly. But yesterday they were not.

The first meeting was with Mayor Tom Stuart of Merid-

ian, Miss., who gave the President a statement of support signed by 20,000 Mississippians.

Following that meeting, the President met with officers of the Reserve Officers Association.

Last night, the President and Mrs. Nixon gave the second dinner in as many days for a group of congressmen and their wives. The dinners, apparently held to repair relations with Capitol Hill, were for "members the President has known for a long time," Warren said.

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