

Hush-Money Talk

Nixon's Claim Stated Again

Washington

The White House yesterday reasserted President Nixon's claim that he told former presidential counsel John W. Dean III that it would be wrong to pay hush money to Watergate defendants.

The White House statement appeared to be directly contrary to a Watergate grand jury's claim that former presidential aide H. R. Haldeman lied when he said Mr. Nixon used the words "it would be wrong."

Questioned about the indictment of Haldeman and the words the President used in a March, 1973, meeting with Dean, deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren said he stood firmly by the President's statement at a press conference last August 22, when the President said that Haldeman's version of what he (Mr. Nixon) said was "accurate."

At that news conference, the President said that after Dean mentioned the problem of raising hush money, Mr. Nixon told him, "We can't give clemency."

Mr. Nixon told his August news conference that "I concluded, as Mr. Haldeman recalls perhaps, and did testify very effectively, one, when I said, 'John, it is wrong, it won't work. We can't give clemency, and we have got to get this story out. And therefore, I direct you, and I direct Haldeman, and I direct (John D.) Ehrlichman, and I direct (John N.) Mitchell to get together tomorrow and then meet with me as to how we get this story out.'"

Dean had testified before the Senate Watergate committee that he told the President it might be necessary to raise as much as \$1 million and that the President responded that would be no problem. Haldeman asserted that the President added that it would be wrong to do so.

On Capitol Hill, Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott (Rep-Pa.) told a group of State Department officers that he had asked for reassurances from the White House that Mr. Nixon used the words "it would be wrong." Scott indicated he

had received a reply that satisfied him.

Scott told the State Department officers he is relying on the White House not to misinform him, and repeated public warnings that he would be furious and would make his wrath felt if he were to find he has been misled.

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