

What Nixon Told Petersen

Washington

President Nixon discussed the possibility of making Henry E. Petersen director of the FBI, but no offer was ever made, a White House spokesman said yesterday.

Last week the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin reported that Petersen had told a grand jury that Mr. Nixon asked him about the FBI job while Petersen was heading the Justice Department's Watergate investigation as assistant attorney general.

The Bulletin said the exchange was believed to have occurred between April 19 and April 26, 1973. This was a time when Mr. Nixon talked frequently to Petersen about Watergate and was considering whether his two closest presidential aides should be asked to resign.

In an account which reportedly was made available by the grand jury to the House Judiciary Committee, Petersen testified that Mr. Nixon "asked me would I like to be director of the FBI, and then he went on and talked for about 15 minutes and I indicated that

was not one of my ambitions."

The account said Mr. Nixon told Petersen later in the same conversation that he was not offering him the FBI job.

White House deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren, responding to an inquiry placed last week after the Bulletin published its account, said there was discussion about Petersen and the FBI job, the discussion involved Mr. Nixon, and no offer was made.

Last year it was disclosed that White House officials had discussed the FBI job with U.S. District Judge Matt Byrne, who was presiding at the time over the Pentagon papers trial of Daniel Ellsberg in Los Angeles.

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