

# A Nixon Dialogue On Co-Conspirators

## Washington

According to White House transcripts, President Nixon said more than a year ago that any administration official named as an unindicted co-conspirator in the Watergate coverup would be suspended immediately.

The White House confirmed on Thursday that a federal grand jury has named the President an unindicted co-conspirator.

Mr. Nixon was discussing the Watergate investigation with assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen on April 17, 1973, when the possibility that members of his staff would be indicted came up.

According to the White House transcript of the conversation, Mr. Nixon asked

Petersen to explain what was meant by unindicted co-conspirator.

**Petersen:** That just means that for one reason or another we don't want to charge them at the time. For example, I am indicted — you're named as an unindicted co-conspirator. You are just as guilty as I am but you are a witness — we are not going to prosecute you.

**Nixon:** I need to know that because . . . (inaudible)

**Petersen:** But all those people that we name — we propose to name only to the extent that we feel we can corroborate. The only thing we can't afford to do is to name, for example, John Mitchell and then come up six months later without enough evidence to nail him.

**Nixon:** Or for that matter

(John D.) Ehrlichman.

**Petersen:** That's right.

**Nixon:** Or (H.R.) Halderman or anybody else.

**Petersen:** That's right.

**Nixon:** In other words you are going to put in there people you know you can indict.

**Petersen:** That's right. Now —

**Nixon:** Well then I'll (inaudible) — I can consider that a charge?

**Petersen:** That's right.

**Nixon:** That's right — in other words, if they're in that I would then say — anybody that was an unindicted co-conspirator would then be immediately put on leave.

*Associated Press*