

Nixon Admits He Slowed  
Watergate Break-in Probe

## President 'Regrets' That He Hid Information on His Role in Coverup

Washington

President Nixon acknowledged yesterday that shortly after the Watergate break-in in June, 1972, he acted to slow the FBI investigation knowing it would protect his re-election committee, and withheld this information from the House Judiciary Committee, the Supreme Court and the public.

"This was a serious act of omission for which I take full responsibility and which I deeply regret," the President said.

Mr. Nixon made the admission in a statement accompanying the release of transcripts of three conversations he held with former chief of staff H. R. Haldeman June 23, 1972, which he said might further damage his case against impeachment.

It is "virtually a foregone conclusion," he said, that the House will vote to impeach him, but he added that he hopes the Senate will look at all the evidence "in perspective" and vote to acquit him.

Mr. Nixon argued that the entire record of his post-Watergate conduct "does not justify the extreme step of impeachment and removal of a President."

In the new transcripts, Mr. Nixon and Haldeman were revealed to have been discussing how best to slow the FBI investigation that had started soon after the Watergate break-in and agreeing to suggest that a full-scale inquiry might uncover some Central Intelligence Agency operations.

At one point, Mr. Nixon told Haldeman to call CIA officials and "just say this is a comedy of errors without getting into it, the President believes it is going to just open the whole Bay of Pigs thing up again . . . and that they should call the FBI in and (unintelligible) don't go

any further into this case. Period!"

In his statement, Mr. Nixon said that "at the time I gave those instructions (to the FBI) I also discussed the political aspects of the situation, and . . . I was aware of the advantages this course of action would have with respect to limiting possible public exposure of involvement by persons connected with the Re-election Committee."

The transcripts he released were made from three of the 64 tapes that the

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Supreme Court last month ordered him to turn over to the U.S. District Court.

Mr. Nixon's statement said that he had reviewed them last May and discovered that he had, indeed, discussed concealing the role of his re-election committee officials.

He said he had not informed the House Judiciary

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Committee, the court, or his own lawyer, James D. St. Clair.

St. Clair later told reporters, "I have no intention of resigning."

Vice President Gerald R. Ford had no comment on the statement, and said he intended to stop talking about impeachment.

"The public is no longer served by my previously expressed belief that, on the

basis of all the evidence known to me and the American people, the President is not guilty of an impeachable offense under the Constitution," he said.

Mr. Nixon did not appear in person in the press rooms, and his statement was given to reporters by Gerald Warren, the deputy

press secretary, who said it had been discussed during a top-level meeting at Camp David Sunday and finally decided upon early yesterday.

Mr. Nixon promised to furnish the Senate with all of the tapes that U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica finds relevant to the Watergate conspiracy and turns over to special prosecutor Leon Jaworski.

"I recognize that this additional material I am now furnishing may further damage my case," the statement said, "especially because attention will be drawn separately to it rather than to the evidence in its entirety."

Mr. Nixon said that when he reviewed the June 23 tapes last May, he "recognized that these presented potential problems, (but) I did not inform my staff or my counsel of it, or those arguing my case, nor did I amend my submission to the Judiciary Committee in order to include and reflect it."

He said his review of the tapes has "so far shown no other major inconsistencies with what I have previously submitted. While I have no way at this stage of being certain that there will not be others, I have no reason to believe that there will be."

He urged that the evidence "be looked at in its

entirety, and the events be looked at in perspective," and concluded:

"Whatever mistakes I made in the handling of Watergate, the basic truth remains that when all the facts were brought to my attention I insisted on a full investigation and prosecution of those guilty. I am firmly convinced that the record, in its entirety, does not justify the extreme step of impeachment and removal of a President.

"I trust that as the constitutional process goes forward, this perspective will prevail."

United Press