

Nixon Admits Halting
Investigation of
Watergate 6 Days
After Break-in;
Expects Impeachment;
Support Ebbs

AUG 6 1974
TAPES RELEASED

President Still Hopeful That the Senate Will Vote for Acquittal

NYTimes

By JOHN HERBERS
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5—In a sharp setback to his fight against impeachment, President Nixon admitted today that six days after the Watergate burglary he ordered a halt to the investigation of the break-in for political as well as national security reasons and that he kept the evidence from his lawyers and supporters on the House Judiciary Committee.

He made the admission in a statement accompanying the

Excerpts from conversations
appear on Pages 14 and 15.

release of transcripts of three conversations on June 23, 1972, which he said might further damage his case against impeachment. It is "virtually a foregone conclusion," the President added, that the House would vote to impeach him but he said he hoped the Senate would look at all the evidence "in perspective" and vote to acquit him.

G.O.P. Senators Briefed

James D. St. Clair, the President's chief lawyer, briefing Republican Senators on what he called "bad news," said that Mr. Nixon would not resign because the President felt it would be setting a precedent for removing future Presidents from office.

Although Mr. Nixon's motives were not entirely clear, it was evident that in view of the fact that the information was to be made public later in any event, he chose to put his own interpretation on it, as he did in release of the first White House transcripts on April 30.

The three transcripts made public today were of conversations with the President's former chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, six days after the Watergate burglary. They were among those Mr. Nixon has had turned over to Judge John J. Sirica under orders of the Supreme Court.

The President said he was making them public so they could be used by the House in its impeachment debate, tentatively scheduled to begin Aug. 19. He said Judge Sirica

was reviewing the first of some 64 conversations and other materials subpoenaed for the trial of some of the Watergate defendants, adding that it was unlikely that the review would be completed in time for the House debate.

Will Send Data to Senate

"It appears at this stage, however, that a House vote of impeachment is, as a practical matter, virtually a foregone conclusion, and that the issue will therefore go to trial in the Senate," he said. "In order to insure that no other significant relevant materials are withheld, I shall voluntarily furnish to the Senate everything from these tapes that Judge Sirica rules should go to the special prosecutor."

Mr. Nixon's characterization of the new material as possibly damaging to his case was viewed by some members of Congress as restrained.

One transcript of a conver-

Continued on Page 16, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

sation with Mr. Haldeman showed that after Mr. Nixon learned that John N. Mitchell, his campaign director, had urged the illegal bugging of Democratic headquarters, he ordered that the Federal Bureau of Investigation be told, "Don't go any further into this case period."

This, and the fact that Mr. Nixon did not tell his lawyers of the evidence for more than two months after he had discovered it on the tapes, immediately brought new defections of Republicans in Congress, including that of his chief defender on the House Judiciary Committee, Representative Charles E. Wiggins of California, who said he would now vote for impeachment.

A Passive Tone

There was a passive tone today about the entire strange procedure at the White House, as if the President, who remained in seclusion, was only going through the procedures of defending his office, to stand on principle against the removal of future Presidents.

The statement was issued after one of his former staunchest supporters, Senator Robert Griffin of Michigan, the Deputy minority leader, had called for his resignation.

Yet the 800-word statement contained the usual justifications for his actions that have become familiar in the Watergate case during the last year and one half. The break-in at the Democratic national headquarters in the Watergate complex took place June 17, 1972.

Mr. Nixon made public his first Watergate transcripts on April 30. In a national television address the night before, he said, as he pointed out today, that "as far as what the President personally knew and did with regard to Watergate and the cover-up is concerned, these materials, together with those already made available, tell it all." Those transcripts began with a conversation on Sept. 15, 1972.

Mr. Nixon said today that in May, after being subpoenaed by the special Watergate prosecutor, Leon Jaworski, to produce additional tapes and materials — those the Supreme Court ordered 12 days ago that he release—he made "a preliminary review" of some of the 64 taped conversations.

2 Talks With Haldeman

Among the conversations Mr. Nixon listened to were two of those of June 23 with Mr. Haldeman.

"Although I recognized that these presented potential problems," Mr. Nixon said, "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."

The President said at the time he did not realize the extent of the "implications which these conversations might now appear to have."

As a result, he continued, "those arguing my case, as well as those passing judgment on the case, did so with information that was incomplete and in some respects erroneous. This was a serious act of commission for which I take full responsibility and which I deeply regret."

Even without that evidence, however, the House Judiciary Committee approved three articles of impeachment, one of them charging Mr. Nixon with participating in the Watergate cover-up.

Mr. Nixon pointed out that on May 22, 1973, shortly after

the Watergate disclosures began to break, he issued a formal written statement saying that he had intervened in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's inquiry into the case because he was concerned it might expose covert activities of the Central Intelligence Agency and sensitive national security matters.

That statement, he said today, was based on his recollection at the times, some 11 months after the fact, plus "documentary materials and relevant testimony."

"The June 23 tapes clearly show, however, that at the time I gave those instructions I also discussed the political aspects of the situation, and that I was aware of the advantages of this course of action would have with respect to limiting possible public exposure of involvement by persons connected with the

re-election committee." He referred to the Committee for the Re-Election of the President, which Mr. Mitchell headed.

Mr. Nixon said his review of the additional tapes had "so far shown no other major inconsistencies with what I have previously submitted." But he added that he was not certain there would not be others although "I have no reason to believe there will be."

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

He urged that two points be borne in mind: first that when the then director of the F.B.I. Patrick L. Gray 3d, expressed concern to him about improper attempts to limit the investigation, "I told him to press ahead vigorously."

The second point, he said, was that he hoped all of the evidence would be looked at in its entirety "and the events be looked at in perspective."

"Whatever mistakes I made in the handling of Watergate," Mr. Nixon said, "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."

Then came the heart of his argument for remaining in office—that only the most extreme violation was ground for removing a President from office.

"I am firmly unconvinced," he said, "that the record, in its entirety, does not justify the extreme step of impeachment and removal of a President."

But the tone of the statement was flat and legalistic. It did not contain the usual arguments that it was important that he be continued in office to carry out the foreign and domestic policies he had begun. Nor did it contain any of his frequent arguments that the Watergate case grew out of the actions of overzealous campaign workers.