

A Study Is Underway, Aide Says

Washington

President Ford fueled the controversy over his grant of an unconditional pardon to Richard Nixon with the disclosure yesterday that pardons for all Watergate defendants are under study.

"I am authorized to say that entire matter is now under study," John Hushen, deputy White House press secretary, said when he was asked if other pardons were being considered.

Under questioning, he said his authority came from the President, but declined in any way to describe the study further.

Hushen did indicate that the study is exploratory in nature, and added: "Let me caution you that all I said is that there is a study; don't try to predict the results of the study."

White House Counsel Philip Buchen said he first learned of the study yesterday morning from presidential counselor Robert Hartmann and knew no more about it.

The announcement was made after an avalanche of protest set off by Mr. Ford's announcement Sunday in which he granted an unconditional pardon to former President Nixon for any federal offenses he may have committed during his 5½-year term of office.

His spokesmen continued to insist that Mr. Ford was aware that his action of Sunday morning would be met with controversy, but there was no sign that he, or his assistants, expected that the Ford administration would ever become so engulfed in the after-effects of the Watergate scandals.

Since Sunday, Mr. Ford, like his predecessor, has not made himself available for questions but has left that to

his counsel, Buchen, and to his press office, which was

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thrown into disorganization by the sudden departure of Press Secretary J. F. terHorst, who resigned in protest over the Nixon pardon.

One of the questions that has been asked of the White House since Sunday was how did Mr. Ford justify pardoning Mr. Nixon, who, according to tape recordings, ordered a halt to the investigation of the Watergate burglary, while Mr. Nixon's subordinates are undergoing trial and serving jail terms for the coverup.

Buchen, asked Sunday whether Mr. Ford was considering pardoning Mr. Nixon's subordinates also, replied, "To my knowledge, he has not given that matter any thought."

Yesterday, after 48 hours of controversy, Hushen was asked whether Mr. Ford was considering a pardon for John W. Dean III, former counsel to Mr. Nixon, and all other persons connected with Watergate. Dean is now serving a prison term and his wife was reported to have written Mr. Ford asking that he, too, be pardoned.

Hushen, holding his first White House press briefing, was asked repeatedly if he understood the probable impact of the Watergate par-

don statement. Hushen said he said it with authority from the President and that all the factors involved "have been taken into account."

Buchen said later that he had not been brought into the study but assumed that he would be.

There were indications that the question of further pardons was being considered as the President re-evaluated his plan to grant limited amnesty to Vietnam draft evaders and deserters.

Mr. Ford was to have announced his plan on that yesterday, but it was announced Monday that it was postponed. Hushen said yesterday it would be announced by the end of the month. 9 SEP

Mr. Ford met for two hours Monday night with top advisers and again yesterday to discuss the amnesty question. Hushen said the of delay was caused by "many the complexities involved" and the President's limited time to deal with them.

There was speculation which the White House officials sought to discourage, that Mr. Ford was considering being more lenient than he had originally planned in view of the protests against the Nixon pardon.