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WAR-WATERGATE TIE IS SEEN BY ZUMWALT

WASHINGTON, May 6 (UPI) —Adm. Elmo Zumwalt said today that President Richard M. Nixon's Watergate troubles forced him to back off from secret commitments made to South Vietnam in order to push the Paris peace accords.

The retired admiral told members of a Senate subcommittee on separation of powers that Watergate made Mr. Nixon's situation unique and that Congress should not overcompensate for Mr. Nixon's "excesses" by restricting the power of future Presidents to make executive agreements with other countries.

Admiral Zumwalt said that Mr. Nixon probably believed he had enough support in Congress in late 1972 and early 1973 to follow through with pledges to "respond vigorously with force" to North Vietnamese violations of the peace accord.

But the retired chief of naval operations stressed that the Paris negotiations took place when "Watergate was changing from amber to red, and the attitude of the Nixon Administration was quite apparently changing with regard to the support we would give to those commitments."

"What was said about those commitments at the time," Admiral Zumwalt added, "was in the midst of a process during which a President was destroying himself and the Presidency was becoming unraveled."