

125/6

# PRESIDENT CALLS FOR A PROSECUTOR OF U.S. OFFICIALS

JUL 20 1976  
Proposal Would Substitute  
for Watergate Reform  
Bill Before Congress

## NIXON PARDON DEFENDED

Ford Says It's Up to Public  
to Determine if Issue  
Is Campaign Factor  
NYTimes

By PHILIP SHABECOFF  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 19—  
President Ford called today for  
the creation of a permanent  
special prosecutor's office to in-  
vestigate wrongdoing by Gov-  
ernment officials. He also said  
that it would be "up to the  
American people" to decide  
whether his pardon of Presi-  
dent Nixon would be a cam-  
paign issue.

At a news conference held  
beneath a giant elm on the  
north lawn of the White House,  
the President said that he had  
pardoned Mr. Nixon because it  
was in the national interest to  
do so. "I would do it again,"  
he added.

Under Mr. Ford's proposal,  
which would be a substitute for  
Watergate reform legislation  
now before Congress, the Presi-  
dent would be empowered, but  
not required, to appoint a spe-  
cial prosecutor. Once appointed,  
however, the prosecutor could  
not be dismissed except for  
"extraordinary improprieties."

### Plans for Running Mate

On another matter, the Presi-  
dent said he would not have  
to conduct a series of inter-  
views to make his choice for  
a Vice-Presidential running  
mate because he already knows  
all potential candidates thor-  
oughly.

Mr. Ford, relaxed and occa-  
sionally chuckling despite fre-  
quently sharp questions, said  
that the validity of a charge  
that he was not intelligent  
enough to be President, made  
by the Democrat's Vice-Presi-  
dential nominee, Senator Wal-  
ter F. Mondale, would also be  
decided by the American peo-  
ple.

### 1,103 Delegates Claimed

Mr. Ford told reporters clus-  
tered around him in a tight  
horseshoe that he was "very  
close right now" to sewing up  
the Republican Presidential  
nomination. He said he had  
1,103 delegates pledged to him  
of the 1,130 necessary to win  
in Kansas City and that he ex-  
pects "more good news soon."

Meanwhile, John P. Sears,  
executive vice chairman of

Ronald Reagan's campaign, said  
that Mr. Reagan already had  
the support of 1,140 delegates  
—10 more than needed for the  
nominations. [Page 20.]

The current tally by The New  
York Times shows Mr. Ford  
with 1,102 delegates against  
1,063 for Mr. Reagan and 94  
still listed as uncommitted. Of  
the 94 uncommitted, 21 have  
told The Times that they are  
leaning to Mr. Ford and five  
that they favor Mr. Reagan.

Continued on Page 20, Column 5

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

The rest say they are still abso-  
lutely uncommitted.

Asked for his assessment of  
Jimmy Carter, the Democratic  
Presidential nominee, after  
watching the Democrats' con-  
vention, Mr. Ford replied, "I  
don't think I really had any im-  
pression of him."

But he added, when asked if  
the Carter-Mondale ticket was  
beatable, "absolutely," and  
said, "It is a rather typical  
Democratic ticket when you  
add it up" and "a ticket that  
can be beaten by the affirma-  
tive approach that I intend to  
take."

### No Label for Anybody

Despite repeated opportuni-  
ties to do so offered by report-  
ers' questions, Mr. Ford de-  
clined to attack Mr. Carter di-  
rectly or to brand the Demo-  
cratic ticket as "liberal," as  
some of his campaign aides  
have been doing. "I am not  
going to put a label on any-  
body," he said.

Today's news conference was  
staged so that the President  
would be framed against the  
background of the North Porti-  
co by the television cameras.  
Several onlookers suggested  
that this was an effort to make  
Mr. Ford look as "Presidential"  
as possible to help in his battle  
with Ronald Reagan for the  
Republican nomination and  
with his later contest with Mr.  
Carter if he turns back his  
Republican challenger.

The President's proposal for  
the creation of a special  
prosecutor's office was con-  
tained in a letter he sent today  
to the Speaker of the House  
of Representatives, Carl Albert.  
The proposal was offered as a  
substitute for Watergate reform  
legislation pending before Con-  
gress and expected to reach the  
Senate floor tomorrow.

### Plan for Prosecutor

Under Mr. Ford's proposal,  
a special prosecutor would be  
appointed by the President,  
with the advice and consent of  
the Senate, to serve a single  
three-year term. The prosecutor  
would be empowered to investi-  
gate charges of wrongdoing by  
the President, Vice President,  
members of Congress and other  
high-ranking Government offi-  
cials.

The prosecutor could be re-  
moved only for "extraordinary  
improprieties," and the Presi-  
dent would be required to sub-  
mit a written report explaining  
such a removal.

President Nixon's dismissal  
of the first special Watergate  
prosecutor, Archibald Cox,  
touched off a storm of protest  
that contributed to Mr. Nixon's  
resignation.

President Ford said that he  
agreed with the general thrust  
of the Watergate reform legis-  
lation now before Congress.  
But he said it would create a  
series of different, independent  
prosecutors and that his legal  
advisers had questioned the  
constitutionality of the way the  
prosecutors would be selected.

Today was the first time that

Mr. Ford had stated that he fa-  
vored a special prosecutor, ac-  
cording to members of his staff.  
Until now, his Administration  
had opposed Watergate legisla-  
tion in Congress.

Recently, however, the  
Watergate scandal and the  
Nixon pardon have gained new  
impetus as political issues.

### Vice-Presidential Plans

On another issue, Mr. Ford  
said he would not interview a  
list of potential Vice-Presi-  
dential candidates, as Mr. Carter  
did, when selecting his own  
running mate.

"I have been thinking about  
this matter for some time," he  
said. "I have known all of the  
individuals who are being con-  
sidered very well. I have  
worked with them, known  
about them. I have studied  
carefully their records. There-  
fore, it won't be a last-minute  
analysis.

"It will be based on a good  
many years of experience and  
opportunities to know how  
they performed in public office  
or otherwise. So, it is not going  
to be a last-minute decision  
where we winnow out the indi-  
viduals in a 48-hour period,"  
he said.

Mr. Ford said that the princi-  
pal criterion he would employ  
when selecting a running mate  
would be his ability to be Presi-  
dent. "Other criteria might be  
age, compatibility with my own  
philosophy, experience both in  
domestic and international af-  
fairs."

The President said he would  
not "get into the numbers  
game" about how many people  
are on his Vice-Presidential list.  
"We have a fine, fine array of  
talent in the Republican Party  
and maybe elsewhere, and so  
we will just keep that open  
until we make the final choice."

When asked what he meant  
by elsewhere, the President  
replied, "Use your imagina-  
tion."

The President also did the  
following:

¶Called on Congress to take  
"affirmative action" on his  
proposals for further tax reduc-  
tions, energy independence,  
stronger anticrime measures  
and general revenue sharing,  
before adjourning.

¶Said that "this Administra-  
tion would be very disturbed  
by Communist participation in  
the Government of Italy."

¶Said that the United States  
had evidence that "the Libyan  
Government has in many ways  
done certain things that might  
have stimulated terrorist activi-  
ty, but I don't think we ought  
to discuss any evidence that we  
might have that might prove  
or disprove that.

¶Said that the Administration  
expect "to carry out the swine  
flu immunization program  
"with or without the help of  
Congress" and expected the full  
cooperation of industry.

Later today the President met  
with a group of about 100 New  
Jersey delegates and alternates  
to the Republican National  
Convention to ask for their sup-  
port.

TREES, LAKES, GREEN GRASS.  
THE FRESH AIR FUND