

Watergate's Prosecutor Declares He Didn't Get Dole Gift Inquiry

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By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 14—The Watergate Special Prosecutor said today that no White House official had made inquiries at his office about allegations that the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate, Senator Robert J. Dole, had accepted illegal campaign contributions prior to Mr. Dole's selection as President Ford's running mate on Aug. 19.

In an extraordinary action, Charles Ruff, the special prosecutor, said that since there had been no White House inquiries if would be incorrect to suggest that his office had given Mr. Dole any "clearance" before or after he was chosen as the party's Vice-Presidential candidate.

After allegations that Mr. Dole had accepted illegal campaign contributions were reported by The New York Times on Sept. 6, White House spokesman had indicated that they investigated the charges and that they were satisfied Mr. Dole had not received the contributions. Though the White House never specifically said it had contacted the special prosecutor, it left the impression an inquiry had been conducted.

Mr. Ruff, through a spokesman, would make no further comment on the matter. His office said that he decided to comment on whether the White House had checked out Mr. Dole after numerous press inquiries on the question.

The New York Times reported on Sept. 6 that Claude C. Wild Jr., a lobbyist for the Gulf Oil Company, had testified before a Federal grand jury that he gave Mr. Dole some \$5,000 in 1973 through William A. Kats, a long-time aide to Mr. Dole.

Edward Schmults, a counsel to Mr. Ford who handled the White House review of

Mr. Dole's background, said that the Kansas Senator had told the White House about the allegations that he accepted illegal contributions and that Mr. Dole denied the charges.

Mr. Schmults said he discussed the matter with Mr. Dole and was "satisfied" the allegations were not true. Meanwhile, the Presidential spokesman, Ron Nessen, had been telling reporters that the White House had checked out the charges and found them not to be true.

In response to Mr. Ruff's announcement, Mr. Schmults said that his office had not checked any of the potential Republican Vice-Presidential candidates through anything but public records in examining their fitness for the Vice Presidency.

He said that the only call his office made to the special prosecutor's office on Mr. Dole came after The New York Times story on Sept. 6 when he called to investigate an allegation that the special prosecutor had leaked the grand jury testimony. He said he was now convinced he had not.

Mr. Schmults said that the White House had decided that it would not use the records of Government investigation agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in checking on the backgrounds of potential Vice-Presidential candidates, because it was power that only the President had and thus would be unfair.

Instead, Mr. Schmults said that the White House had required detailed information from the candidate. He said in Mr. Dole's case he had checked other sources, outside of closed Government files on the Gulf matter, but declined to enumerate them.