

MONDALE CRITICIZES FORD ON WATERGATE

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Scores Response of President and
Dole to Scandal and Says Nixon
Was Defended to 'Bitter End'

By JOHN M. CREWDSON
Special to The New York Times

MILWAUKEE, Oct. 29—Senator Walter F. Mondale said today that if President Ford and Senator Robert J. Dole, his running mate, had "had their way about it," Richard M. Nixon would "still be President of the United States."

In what he said was a response to the issue of "trust in Government" raised by Mr. Ford in recent days, the Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee abandoned his standard stump speech on economics to recall here in detail the responses of Mr. Ford and Mr. Dole to the unfolding Watergate scandal three years ago.

Mr. Mondale accused the President, while he was House minority leader and later when he was Vice President, of having embarked "on a course of behavior that was designed to protect Mr. Nixon," whose activities, he said, Mr. Ford had defended "to the bitter end."

Mr. Mondale's aides said early in the day that the Minnesota Senator had decided it was necessary to put Mr. Ford's Watergate role in perspective at a time when the President was attempting to place some political distance between himself and Mr. Nixon.

Disclosure of Cabinet Plan

His remarks came in a speech before a convention of the Wisconsin Education Association in which Mr. Mondale also disclosed that if Jimmy Carter was elected next Tuesday he would establish within the Cabinet an independent Department of Education.

Mr. Mondale maintained today that he was "not charging, and I do not believe, that either of our opponents were involved in the Watergate scandals."

The question, he said, was rather whether Mr. Ford and Senator Dole "truly understood the Watergate crisis for what it was, the worst political scandal in American history, and whether they responded to it with leadership that placed respect for the law above politics."

Senator Mondale had made many of the same points he underlined today in a speech in Kansas City on Oct. 5. But he underscored them today by asserting, for example, that "both Mr. Ford and Mr. Dole defended Mr. Nixon, and if they'd had their way about it, I'm convinced that Mr. Nixon would still be the President of the United States."

Mr. Mondale again said that as the House Republican leader in the fall of



Associated Press

Senator Walter F. Mondale, the Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate, after addressing Wisconsin Education Association in Milwaukee yesterday.

1972, Mr. Ford had acted to halt a Congressional investigation of the Watergate break-in three months earlier, thus helping Mr. Nixon to be re-elected that "without the American people knowing the full story of official lawlessness carried out by that Administration."

Reference to Dole's Action

A few months later, he added, Senator Dole introduced a resolution that would have required the Senate Watergate Committee hearings to be conducted in executive, or closed, session.

He criticized President Ford, who preceded Mr. Mondale's appearance at the teachers convention by a few hours, for having failed to discern the magnitude of the Watergate scandals as the disclosures accelerated.

Mr. Mondale said that two weeks before Mr. Nixon resigned the Presidency in August 1974, Mr. Ford, as Vice President, having reviewed Watergate tapes and documents, declared "from the bottom of my heart" that Mr. Nixon was "right" about his innocence. *A

Two days later, Mr. Mondale added, Mr. Ford termed the House Judiciary

Committee's investigation of Mr. Nixon, which led to three articles of impeachment against the incumbent President a "travesty." *B

The Democratic Senator also attacked the agreement between the White House and Mr. Nixon's lawyers six days after Mr. Ford became President "allowing Mr. Nixon to take all the White House tapes and documents to San Clemente." That agreement was subsequently rescinded.

Finally, Mr. Mondale noted that "in response to massive evidence of abuses" by the Federal intelligence agencies, President Ford "ignored bipartisan recommendations for reform" of those agencies.

Asked at a news conference later why he had chosen to raise these issues again, Mr. Mondale replied that it was Mr. Ford who had made an issue of his handling, as President "of the tragic betrayal of trust of the American people" by his predecessor.

"He's the one who raised the issue," Mr. Mondale said, adding that he "wanted very much to refresh the public's memory on a course of behavior that was designed to protect Mr. Nixon."

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*B Vol. 3, p. 211, F/1 (27 Jul 74)