

Nixon Now Hints Aides Involved in Watergate

He Ordered 2d Staff Probe

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WASHINGTON—President Nixon, in a significant reversal from his previous position on the Watergate affair announced Tuesday that "major developments" had been unearthed by a second investigation he had ordered into the incident.

The President, while giving no details, hinted that high Administration officials, past or present, may face criminal charges. But he mentioned no names, saying it would be "improper to be more specific now."

Mr. Nixon, who said he had ordered the new investigation on March 21, had maintained since last August that an earlier inquiry conducted by White House counsel John W. Dean 3d had cleared everyone then in the administration of any involvement in what he called "this very bizarre incident."

Since then, Dean's name has come up in connection with the case.

THE PRESIDENT, in reading a three-minute statement to newsmen jammed into the White House press room, also announced that, "all members of the White House staff will appear voluntarily" when summoned to testify before the select Senate committee investigating the break-in and bugging at the Democratic National Headquarters.

Previously, Mr. Nixon had held that he would not permit any of present or former aides to testify before any

committee of Congress.

The Nixon statement came amid demands from Republican officials that the White House clear up the growing scandal before it does additional damage in the party and GOP candidates.

THE STATEMENT also came as the Senate Watergate committee is preparing for public hearings next month. Massive news leaks from both the committee's probe and a grand jury investigation have already implicated a number of present and former Administration and White House officials.

Among those whose names have come up, in addition to Dean, the former Attorney General John Mitchell, former Nixon campaign official Jeb Stuart Magruder, White House aide Gordon Strachan; former Presidential appointments secretary Dwight Chapin and the President's personal attorney, Herbert Kalmbach.

White House Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler said after the President's statement Tuesday that previous White House comments and denials about the Watergate case are now "inoperative."

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Dean's handling of the White House investigation came under sharp attack on Capitol Hill, Ziegler told reporters that "it is totally false" that Dean had known in advance of the illegal bugging.

James W. McCord Jr., former security chief of Mr. Nixon's re-election committee and one of seven men convicted for the Watergate bugging, has testified to the Senate committee that he was told that Dean, Mitchell and Macruder approved plans for the illegal operation.

The President's statement and Ziegler's comments made it clear that Dean has been relieved of his duties as White House Watergate investigator.

Mr. Nixon said he met at length last Sunday in his Executive Office Building suite with Attorney General Richard Kleindienst and Assistant Attorney General Henry Peterson "to review the facts which had come to me in my investigation and also to review the progress of the Department of Justice investigation."

DEAN WAS NOT PRESENT at the meeting. Ziegler said no members of the White House staff were involved in the new probe, although the President did turn to aides for "information, discussion and to carry on certain assignments for him"

Mr. Nixon declared, "As I have said before and I have said throughout this entire matter, all government employes and especially White House staff employes are expected fully to cooperate in this matter.

"I condemn any attempts to cover up in this case, no matter who is involved."

Mr. Nixon's statement strongly implied that he ordered the new Watergate in-

vestigation on March 21 because of some new evidence that has not yet been publicly reported.

At that time, the President's nominee to be permanent FBI director, L. Patrick Gray, was encountering rough opposition in the Senate because of his handling of the Watergate case.

ON MARCH 21, Gray testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that he had given Dean raw FBI files, an

apparent violation of guidelines Gray himself had decreed.

On March 23, two days after the date Mr. Nixon said that he ordered his new investigation, McCord made sensational new allegations to Chief U. S. District Judge John J. Sirica, who had tried the Watergate case and was about to pass sentence on the seven convicted participants.

McCord, in a letter read in open court, charged that political pressure had been applied

to get the defendants to plead guilty and remain silent. He said others involved in the case had not yet been publicly identified and claimed that perjury was committed during the trial.

MCCORD FOLLOWED UP his letter by telling the Senate committee—in secret testimony that quickly leaked—that he had been told by convicted co-conspirator G. Gordon Liddy that Mitchell, Magruder and Dean were involved.

Although McCord's testimony was entirely hearsay, Federal investigators are known to have evidence they believe supports his story.

FBI reports released during the Gray hearings indicated that Mr. Nixon's personal lawyer, Kalmbach, told agents he hired alleged political saboteur Donald Segretti, and paid him more than \$30,000 at Chapin's direction.

Mr. Nixon's announcement that he will allow his aides to testify before the Senate

committee avoided an impending collision with the panel's chairman, Sen. Sam Ervin (D., N.C.), who had threatened to order the arrest of any White House staffer refusing a subpoena.

Mr. Nixon said that under an agreement "satisfactory to both sides," Presidential aides may first be questioned behind closed doors, "if appropriate," and they may refuse to answer specific questions on the grounds of executive privilege.