

HAIDEMAN, EHRLICHMAN, RICHARDSON PUT IN KLEIN NIXON ACCEPTS ONUS FOR

NEW DATA CITED

President Tells How He Changed Mind About Charges

By JOHN HEBBERS

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 30—

President Nixon insisted tonight that he did not know of the political espionage or its attempted cover-up last year in the Watergate case but that he accepted responsibility.

Appearing on nationwide radio and television, the President said that he had delegated the running of his 1972 campaign for re-election to others in order to carry out his search for peace in Vietnam and other Presidential responsibilities. But he added:

"In any organization, the man at the top must bear the responsibility. That responsibility belongs here in this office

and I accept it."

The President also said that he had given his new Attorney General, Elliot L. Richardson, authority to hire an outside special prosecutor if he thought one was needed to find all the facts in the Watergate case. Having turned the case over to Mr. Richardson, he said, he will again pursue full-time the responsibilities of finding peace abroad and a better life for Americans.

Speaks 'From My Heart'

The President, saying that he wanted to address the nation "from my heart," described the charges against his close personal and political friends. He said that "the inevitable result" had been to raise serious questions about the White House itself.

He said he had been "appalled at this senseless, illegal action" when he first learned last summer about the break-in at Democratic headquarters in the Watergate complex.

Throughout last year, the President said, he received "continuous reassurances" that none of his key aides had been involved and thus he "dis-

DEAN RESIGN; INSTEAD POST; WATERGATE

counted" news accounts casting doubt on the White House denials. Until last month, he said, he was confident that the charges were unfounded.

"However, new information then came to me which persuaded me there was a real possibility that some of these charges were true," Mr. Nixon said, and that there had been an effort to hide the involve-

ment. He said he had then ordered a new investigation, with the reports it produced to be filed "directly to me, right here in the White House."

The President, having accepted the resignation of his two top assistants, thus became faced with having to reshape the White House staff and find

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a way for the Administration to maintain its credibility.

The President was urged by Republican leaders around the country to name a chief of staff who has been in no way implicated in the allegations of political sabotage and who has an impeccable record for public service.

Mr. Nixon's decision to accept the resignations of his two aides was made over the weekend in the isolation of his mountaintop retreat at Camp David, Md., as both his friends and foes waited and wondered what he would do.

It was a characteristic performance for the 60-year-old President, who has prided himself on his handling of many crisis in his long political career. There was evidence that this one was filled with as much personal trauma as any in the past.

Mr. Nixon began his retreat Friday evening after the Watergate disclosures rocked the White House all week, culminating in the resignation of L. Patrick Gray 3d as acting director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the President's hurried appointment of William D. Ruckelshaus as a temporary replacement.

Key Aides Left Behind

The President went by helicopter with his usual security force and his Irish setter, King Timahoe. Among those left behind were his close confidants of his four and a half years in the Presidency—H. R. Haldeman, the White House chief of staff, and John D. Ehrlichman, his chief domestic adviser, men characterized today as "two of my closest friends and most trusted assistants."

All week there had been indi-

cations that Mr. Nixon hoped to ride out the scandals of political espionage with Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman in place. They accompanied him on a trip to Mississippi on Friday, and several White House sources said that the two men had been attempting to hold their jobs.

But the pressures from Republican leaders around the country for dismissal of all major officials who had been mentioned in the Watergate case or were responsible for White House involvement had become great.

For much of the weekend, the President was reported to be in seclusion at the wooded retreat in the Catocin Mountains, 70 miles from the White House, with only King Timahoe for company.

Then, on Saturday evening, things began to happen. The President called for his personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods, an indication that he might be preparing a statement in the Watergate case.

Yesterday, the helicopter traffic was heavy between the White House and Camp David. First, Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman flew up and conferred with the President. So did Richard G. Kleindienst, the Attorney General, who had not been implicated in the scandals but who had personal and professional relations with some who were. Elliot L. Richardson, the Secretary of Defense, was called off a Washington tennis court and whisked to the mountaintop.

Morning Announcement

Then this morning, shortly before noon, Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, appearing harried and shaken, announced that the President had accepted the resignations of Mr. Haldeman,

Mr. Ehrlichman, Mr. Kleindienst and John W. Dean 3d, the White House counsel; that he had appointed Mr. Richardson as Attorney General; and that the President was going on radio and television to discuss the matter.

The White House left the impression that, while Mr. Dean had been dismissed outright, Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman had agreed in their meeting with the President to resign with Mr. Nixon's good wishes. It was understood, however, that Mr. Ehrlichman was more agreeable to leaving than was Mr. Haldeman, the man who had directed the White House staff with stern efficiency and had wielded more influence there than any other aide.

Agents Are Cautioned

White House sources said later that, although the decision had been extremely painful to the President, he had had little choice in agreeing to the dismissals. His aides' prestige had been so damaged that the work of the White House staff had been seriously impaired.

One sign of this came from the Secret Service, whose agents guard the President. A few days ago, agents said today, the word spread from superiors that they were to stay aloof from all White House staff members and avoid the friendly social discourse that marked their relations in the past.

'Creativity' in Crises

According to students of Richard Nixon, his handling of this crisis followed the pattern that he described in his book, "Six Crises," published in 1962 and that was observed by others in his years in the Presidency—first his decision to take on the crisis, then a period of isolation in which he

makes up his mind and braces for the combat ahead, then the offensive to win over public opinion.

"Meeting crises involves creativity," Mr. Nixon wrote in the introduction of his book. "It engages all a man's talents. A man who has never lost himself in a cause bigger than himself has missed one of life's mountaintop experiences. Only in losing himself does he find himself. Only then does he discover all the latent strengths he never knew he had and which would otherwise have remained dormant."

James David Barber, chairman of the department of political science at Duke University, said in a controversial book published last year, "The Presidential Character":

"When there is [a situation] which he [Mr. Nixon] perceives as making him seriously vulnerable to public exposure of personal inadequacy, he is likely to move into his crisis pattern. The threat of this situation is multiplied when it is combined with a serious risk of losing power. These themes are linked because he believes his power to be dependent upon his public reputation as an able, reliable and righteous person."

2 AIDES PRAISED

Counsel Forced Out —Leonard Garment Takes Over Job

5/1/73

By R. W. APPLE Jr.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 30 —

President Nixon accepted today the resignation of two top aides and his Attorney General and asked for and received the resignation of his White House counsel, as a consequence of the Watergate case, one of the most widespread scandals in American Presidential history.

H. R. Haldeman, the austere and secretive White House

Texts of Nixon announcement and resignations, Page 30.

chief of staff, and John D. Ehrlichman, the President's chief adviser on domestic affairs, maintained their innocence in letters submitting their resignations. Both said their ability to carry out their daily duties had been undermined.

The President chose Elliot L. Richardson, the Secretary of Defense, to succeed Richard G. Kleindienst as Attorney General and placed him in charge of the Watergate investigation. Mr. Kleindienst said he had quit because close friends had become Watergate suspects and "impartial enforcement of the law" ruled out such "intimate relationships."

Dean's Departure Asked

Mr. Nixon also announced that he had "requested and accepted" the resignation of John W. Dean 3d, the White House counsel, who had threatened to implicate superiors. Leonard Garment, a special Presidential consultant, was named to replace Mr. Dean temporarily.

No replacements for the two key aides were named.

In a related development, the United States Information Agency announced tonight that Gordon Strachan had resigned as

general counsel "after learning that persons with whom he had worked closely at the White House had submitted their resignations today." The statement said Mr. Strachan "stressed that he had no complicity in the Democratic National Committee break-in or in any alleged attempt to cover it up."

Mr. Haldeman's and Mr. Ehrlichman's departures strip the White House of its central operating mechanism at a time when far-reaching decisions must be made on inflation, Indochina policy and American relations with Europe.

The actions were announced by the Presidential press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, before Mr. Nixon returned from a three-day stay at his mountain-top retreat at Camp David, Md.,

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for a television speech to the nation.

Mr. Ziegler, a protégé of Mr. Haldeman's, looked haggard as he released the news at the morning briefing. Mr. Ziegler is the only man remaining from the Haldeman-Ehrlichman group, which exercised so much power in Mr. Nixon's first term.

Six persons connected with the case have resigned recently
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from the Government, including the four who left today and L. Patrick Gray 3d, acting director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Jeb Stuart Magruder, a former Haldeman aide.

Three others quit earlier: John N. Mitchell, former Attorney General; Charles W. Colson, former special counsel to the President, and Dwight L. Chapin, former appointments secretary to the President. All had been implicated, directly or indirectly, in the Watergate bugging last June.

The resignations came after a week of pressure from newspapers, leaders of the bar, Republican politicians, Cabinet members, Senators of both parties and White House officials.

Suspicion at the Door

Although Mr. Nixon emphasized that "neither the submission nor the acceptance" of Mr. Haldeman's and Mr. Ehrlichman's resignations "should be seen by anyone as evidence of any wrongdoing," the political effect of the moves was to carry the cloud of Watergate suspicion to the door of the President's office.

Two key questions remained unanswered as groups of stunned and stricken aides gathered in White House offices. They were the following:

1. Will President Nixon replace Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman with men of similar attitudes, and thereby continue to operate the White House on the old lines, or will he decide to choose new sorts of men in an attempt to operate in a less isolated atmosphere?
2. Will the departure of Mr. Ehrlichman and Mr. Haldeman get the President off the defensive, or will the grand jury indictments, the trials and the Senate hearings to come batter him still more and further impede the work of the Government?

New Men Different

A clue to the future of the White House staff may have been provided, sources close to the President said, by the three

men he selected for sensitive positions in the last four days. The three—Mr. Richardson, Mr. Garment and William D. Ruckelshaus, the acting F.B.I. chief—share several traits: moderate Republicanism, political experience (compared with the political inexperience of Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman), an accessibility to press and public and experience in working in the Nixon Administration.

Most of the same characteristics apply to those being discussed as candidates for the Haldeman and Ehrlichman positions. Among them are Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Ambassador to India; Donald Rumsfeld, Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and Robert H. Finch, who served as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and as a White House counselor.

As one central participant in the hidden drama of last weekend said, "It is a very complicated moment here."

But important decisions were falling to Mr. Richardson, a Boston Brahmin who, if confirmed, will become only the fourth man in American history to have served in three Cabinet posts in the same Administration. Before moving to Defense,

E.P.A. Measure Gains

WASHINGTON, April 30 (AP)—The Senate passed and sent to the House today a bill authorizing \$3.5-million for operation of the Council on Environmental Quality in the next two years.

he was at Health, Education and Welfare.

The President's announcement said that Mr. Richardson would "involve himself immediately in the investigative process surrounding the Watergate matter," that he would be responsible for "coordinating all Federal agencies in uncovering the whole truth," and that he would recommend "appropriate changes in the law to prevent future campaign abuses."

Whether to appoint a special prosecutor to succeed Earl L. Silbert, who has handled the case so far, will also be decided by Mr. Richardson, a White House official said.

Mr. Richardson has not resigned as Secretary of Defense, but William P. Clements Jr., his deputy, will take over much of the burden at the Pentagon, at least temporarily. Mr. Clements, a Texas oil man, is considered a conservative.

In their letters to the President, both Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman said that the case had so absorbed them that they were unable to carry on their work. In the last two weeks, parts of the Government have been paralyzed by the Watergate revelations.

Mr. Ehrlichman complained bitterly about the "repeated rumor, unfounded charges or implications and whatever else the media carries" that had "impaired" his "present usefulness." Insisting that he had done nothing wrong, the conceded nonetheless that "the appearance of honesty and integrity is every bit as important as the fact of one's honesty and integrity."

He said he himself had requested meetings this week with the prosecution and the Senate investigating staff.

Mr. Haldeman, in a somewhat briefer letter, said that he had "always met the high and

exacting standards of integrity which you have so clearly and properly demanded."

Mr. Nixon, praising the men as "two of my closest friends and most trusted assistants," said the decision to accept their resignations had been difficult. But authoritative sources reported that Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman, after resisting resignation all last week, had been persuaded by the President yesterday at Camp David that they really had no alternative.

"He didn't really ask them to resign," said a Republican source. "The three of them decided it mutually."

No such niceties applied in the case of Mr. Dean, who said, 10 days ago that he refused to be made the "scapegoat" in the

case. In an unusual step, the White House statement said explicitly that he had been asked to resign.

Moreover, Mr. Nixon, who praised the "enormous" contributions of Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman, said nothing of Mr. Dean's service. It appeared that in the weeks to come, Mr. Dean would be struggling in the courts and in the Senate hearing against the other former White House officials.

Mr. Haldeman has acknowledged over-all responsibility for what he and other Administration figures considered a legitimate intelligence operations during the campaign. Also, he has been accused of ordering a \$350,000 cash fund kept at the White House during the campaign for unknown uses.

Both Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman have been charged with participation in a cover-up of the Watergate conspiracy. Mr. Ehrlichman was present at a June 28 meeting with Mr. Gray, then director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. When Mr. Dean handed over documents taken from E. Howard Hunt Jr., a convicted conspirator.

Mr. Gray has said he destroyed the documents at the suggestion of Mr. Dean. Mr. Ehrlichman has denied that he knew what the documents were or that he ordered Mr. Gray to destroy them.

Mr. Dean has reportedly implicated both Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman in an alleged White House cover-up.