

# Texts of Statement by Nixon and of Letters of Resignation of Three Aides

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Following are the texts of a statement by President Nixon today announcing staff resignations and other changes and of letters of resignation to the President from H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, White House aides, and Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst:

## Nixon Statement

I have today received and accepted the resignation of Richard G. Kleindienst as Attorney General of the United States. I am appointing Elliot L. Richardson to succeed him as Attorney General and will submit Mr. Richardson's name to the Senate for confirmation immediately.

Mr. Kleindienst asked to be relieved as Attorney General because he felt that he could not appropriately continue as head of the Justice Department now that it appears its investigation of the Watergate and related cases may implicate individuals with whom he has had a close personal and professional association.

In making this decision, Mr. Kleindienst has acted in accordance with the highest standards of public service and legal ethics. I am accepting his resignation with regret and with deep appreciation for his dedicated service to this Administration.

Pending Secretary Richardson's confirmation as Attorney General, I have asked him to involve himself immediately in the investigative process surrounding the Watergate matter. As Attorney General, Mr. Richardson will assume full responsibility and

authority for coordinating all Federal agencies in uncovering the whole truth about this matter and recommending appropriate changes in the law to prevent future campaign abuses of the sort recently uncovered. He will have total support from me in getting this job done.

In addition, I have today accepted the resignations of two of my closest friends and most trusted assistants in the White House, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman.

I know that their decision to resign was difficult; my decision to accept it was difficult; but I respect and appreciate the attitude that led them to it.

### 'Regret Their Departure'

I emphasize that neither the submission nor the acceptance of their resignations at this time should be seen by anyone as evidence of any wrongdoing by either one. Such an assumption would be both unfair and unfounded.

Throughout our association, each of these men has demonstrated a spirit of selflessness and dedication that I have seldom seen equalled. Their contributions to the work of this Administration have been enormous. I greatly regret their departure.

Finally, I have today requested and accepted the resignation of John W. Dean 3d from his position on the staff as White House counsel.

Effective immediately, Leonard Garment, special consultant to the President, will take on additional duties as counsel to the President, and will continue acting in this capacity until a permanent successor to Mr. Dean is named. Mr. Garment will represent the White House in all matters relating to the Watergate investigation and will report directly to me.

## Resignation Letters

By Ehrlichman

For the past two weeks it has become increasingly evident that, regardless of the actual facts, I have been a target of public attack. The nature of my position on your staff has always demanded that my conduct be both apparently and actually beyond reproach. I have always felt that the appearance of honesty and integrity is every bit as important to such a position as the fact of one's honesty and integrity.

Unfortunately, such appearances are not always governed by facts. Realistically, they can be affected by repeated rumor, unfounded charges or implications and whatever else the media carries. For instance, this week totally unfounded stories appeared in The Los Angeles Times claiming I had asked our embassy in Lebanon to help the Vesco group in a banking deal. I not only did not do so but, in actual fact, I caused the State Department to cable the embassy that no one at the White House had any interest in the Vesco dealings.

Since I have already reported to you many of the facts in the Gray case, I need only say that at no time did I directly or indirectly suggest that Mr. Gray should do other than keep the Hunt Documents, although there have been reports to the contrary. Equally without merit are the source stories about some alleged involvement in the Watergate matter.

### 'Impaired By Attacks'

As I analyze my situation, I have to conclude that my present usefulness to you and ability to discharge my duties have been impaired

by these attacks, perhaps beyond repair.

It is not fair to you and my staff colleagues for me to try to do my job under these circumstances. Too much of my time and attention is and will be consumed in concern for and straightening out our such allegations. At my request, I am going to have separate interviews this week with the district attorney and the Senate committee counsel.

Thus, I am looking forward to an early review of the facts and evidence with the appropriate authorities, and I should spend the time necessary in relation thereto. One of the toughest problems we have in this life is in seeing the difference between the apparent and the real, and in basing our actions only on that which is real. We all must do that more than we do. I have confidence in the ultimate prevalence of truth; I intend to do what I can to speed truth's discovery.

Therefore, Mr. President, I submit to you my resignation. There are on the domestic Council staff so many good people of ability that I am confident a transition of my responsibilities can be affected without loss of progress. I will do all I can to assist in accomplishing the transition.

## By Haldeman

As you know, I had hoped and expected to have had an earlier opportunity to clear up various allegations and innuendos that have been raised in connection with matters related to the Watergate case. It now appears that this process may consume considerable time. Meanwhile, there is apparently to be no interruption in the flood of stories arising

every day from all sorts of sources.

I fully agree with the importance of a complete investigation by the appropriate authorities of all the factors that may be involved; but am deeply concerned that, in the process, it has become virtually impossible under these circumstances for me to carry on my regular responsibilities in the White House.

It is imperative that the work of the Office of the President not be impeded and your staff must be in a position to focus their attention on the vital areas of domestic and international concern that face you, rather than being diverted by the daily rumors and developments in the Watergate case. For these reasons, I submit my resignation as Assistant to the President.

I intend to cooperate fully with the investigation—and will at my request be meeting this week for that purpose with the U.S. attorneys and with the counsel to the Senate select committee.

I am convinced that, in due course, I will have the opportunity not just to clear up any allegations or implications of impropriety but also to demonstrate that I have always met the high and exacting standards of integrity which you have so clearly and properly demanded of all who serve on the White House staff.

I have full confidence that when the truth is known the American people will be totally justified in their pride in the Office of the President and in the conduct of that office by President Nixon.

## By Kleindienst

It is with deep regret and after long and searching thought that I hereby submit my resignation as Attorney

General, to take effect upon the appointment and qualification of my successor.

Even though, as you know, I had previously indicated a desire to leave the Government this year for family and financial reasons, the circumstances surrounding the disclosures made to me on Sunday, April 15, 1973 by Assistant Attorney General Petersen, United States Attorney Tjus, and Assistant United States Attorney Silbert, dictate this decision at this time. Those disclosures informed me, for the first time, that persons with whom I had close personal and professional associations could be involved in conduct violative of the laws of the United States. Fair and impartial enforcement of the law requires that a person who has not had such intimate relationships be the Attorney General of the United States.

### 'Mindful of Your Charge'

It is not for me to comment now on the tragedy that has occurred. However, I will always be mindful of your charge to me from the very beginning that the entire matter be fully investigated and that the full effect of the law be administered no matter who it might involve or affect. You can be proud of the Department of Justice for the manner in which it, from the beginning, has responded to that charge.

Finally, let me express my deep personal appreciation to you for having appointed me the 68th Attorney General of the United States. It is the greatest honor I shall ever have. I shall always be humbly proud to have been a part of the Department of Justice and to have had the opportunity to serve my country as a part of your Administration.