

Nixon Pledges 'No Whitewash' On Watergate

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President Nixon told the American people last night that the responsibility for the Watergate affair "belongs here in this office" and that he takes full responsibility even though he did not know of it until later.

In his televised address to the nation, Mr. Nixon said it now is essential to restore faith in the American system and to make certain that "such abuses" are purged from politics.

The President promised that there would be 'no whitewash at the White House' and he said he had authorized Elliot L. Richardson—who was named yesterday to be Attorney General—to appoint a special supervisory prosecutor if that appears to be necessary.

Promising a full, fair and impartial investigation "no matter who is involved," the President said that those who committed criminal acts "must bear the liability and pay the penalty."

He said that the easiest course would be for him to blame those who had the responsibility to run the campaign. But that would be "a cowardly thing to do," Mr. Nixon said in declaring that he would not place the blame on subordinates but would accept it himself.

Mr. Nixon praised the system which has exposed the Watergate scandal, and specifically praised "a determined grand jury, an honest prosecutor, a courageous judge—John Sirica—and a vigorous free press."

He said that he had been so busy on foreign affairs and other issues that he failed to devote full attention to last year's campaign.

Now, he said, he owes it to his "great office" and to the American people that justice be done regardless of whom it touches.

He also spoke of his anguish in accepting the resignations of White House aides H. R. (Bob) Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman and Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst.

Mr. Nixon worked on his speech over the weekend and yesterday at Camp David, Md., returning to the White House only an hour before he went on the air.

He was accompanied on the helicopter flight from the Maryland retreat by speechwriter Raymond K. Price and Rose Mary Woods, his personal secretary.

No advance copies of the speech were made available.

In a departure from custom, the White House refused to permit photographs of the President following his televised address.

Both the Associated Press and United Press International filed formal protests against the barring of photographers, but press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler, who refused to say who ordered the ban, said "the decision is no."