

Concern for Nation Watergate Investi

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In an extraordinary, 4,000-word statement yesterday, President Nixon said national security problems of "crucial importance" caused him to pay insufficient attention to warning signals of a Watergate cover-up and led him to order limitations to the Watergate investigation.

Acknowledging that there were "apparently wide-ranging efforts to limit the (Watergate) investigation or to conceal the possible involvement of members of the administration," he confessed that he had not adequately pursued indications of wrongdoing he received.

"With hindsight, it is apparent that I should have given more heed to the warning signals I received along the way about a Watergate cover-up and less to the reassurances," Mr. Nixon said.

However, he asserted again that he will "not abandon my responsibilities" and "will continue to do the job I was elected to do."

In two statements, the President reviewed the history of the investigation and asserted his innocence. He again declared that he never offered clemency to Watergate defendants, that he never tried to implicate the CIA and that he did not know until two months ago that funds were provided the Watergate defendants.

Modifying his earlier definition of executive privilege, Mr. Nixon said it will not be invoked in any testimony concerning possible criminal conduct in matters now under investigation.

While conceding that unethical and illegal activities had taken place, the President charged that recent disclosures

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have given a "grossly misleading" impression of many facts relating to his role.

None of these unethical or illegal activities "took place with my specific approval or knowledge."

"I have found myself accused of involvement in activities I never heard of until I read about them in news accounts," Mr. Nixon said.

The President's two statements were handed to newsmen at the White House in the late afternoon. Mr. Nixon was not present to answer questions, but presidential counsel Leonard Garment, special counsel J. Fred Buzhardt and Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler were.

They were subjected to a 70-minute barrage of questions that ended in a shouting match. Garment heatedly denied

that the statement indirectly acknowledged that the President participated in the cover-up.

In the lengthier of the two statements, the President sought to separate secret investigations initiated earlier in his term from the Watergate break-in.

He told how J. Edgar Hoover, the late FBI director, refused in the last years of his life to cooperate with other federal intelligence agencies.

Hoover's refusal to cooperate, the President said, led him to establish a special investigating unit in the White House to check on subversive activities and on leaks of national security documents.

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Text of President's Statement.

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PRESIDENT, From A1

"Allegations surrounding the Watergate affair have so escalated that I feel a further statement from the President is required at this time," the statement began.

"A climate of sensationalism has developed in which even second-or-third-hand hearsay charges are headlined as fact and repeated as fact.

"Important national security operations which themselves had no connection with Watergate have become entangled in the case."

The President said that he was not trying to use national security as a "cover" on Watergate "but rather to separate" national security issues from Watergate.

Long before the Watergate break-in, the President said, he initiated three secret operations.

The first, begun in 1969, involved "fewer than 20 wiretaps" ordered to "find and stop serious national security leaks."

Second, in 1970, following "a wave of bombings and explosions . . . rioting and violence," he ordered a new program involving internal security operations.

When Hoover objected, the plan was never put into

effect. Hoover had earlier discontinued the FBI's liaison with the CIA and in July, 1970 "ended the FBI's normal liaison with all other agencies except the White House," the President said.

Third, in 1971, when The New York Times began publishing the Pentagon Papers, a special investigations unit was established in the White House "to plug leaks of vital security information."

"The unit operated under extremely tight security rules," the President said. "Its existence and functions were known only to a very few persons at the White House. These included Messrs. Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Dean." The President accepted their resignations on April 30.

The unit was under the direction of Egil Krogh, who resigned this month as Under Secretary of Transportation and had as its members E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy, two of the convicted Watergate burglars.

The President said that "because of the extreme gravity of the situation" involved in the leak of the Pentagon Papers, "I did impress upon Mr. Krogh the vital importance to the national security of his assignment."

But the President said: "I did not authorize and had

no knowledge of any illegal means to be used to achieve this goal.

"However, because of the emphasis I put on the crucial importance of protecting the national security, I can understand how highly motivated individuals could have felt justified in engaging in specific activities that I would have disapproved had they been brought to my attention.

"Consequently, as President, I must and do assume responsibility for such actions despite the fact that I at no time approved or had knowledge of them."

When the Watergate case broke, the President said he mistakenly assumed that CIA was involved. Because he wanted to guard against disclosure of CIA operations and operations of the special investigating unit, "I instructed Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman to ensure that the investigation of the break-in (at the Watergate) not expose either an unrelated covert operation of the CIA or the activities of the White House investigations unit."

While this instruction was communicated to former Acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray and to Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters, CIA's deputy director, "it was certainly not my intent, nor my wish, that the investigation of the Water-

gate break-in or of related acts be impeded in any way.

The President said that to the extent that he may "in any way have contributed to the climate" that led to illegal and unethical activities, "I did not intend to; to the extent that I failed to prevent them, I should have been more vigilant."

It now appears, he added, that certain persons went "beyond my directives and sought to expand on my efforts to protect the national security operations in order to cover up any involvement they or certain others might have had in Watergate."

Declaring that the truth about Watergate should be brought out, Mr. Nixon said that Attorney General-designate Elliot L. Richardson, by his selection of Archibald Cox as special prosecutor, "has demonstrated his determination to see the truth brought out."

The President hinted that he expects additional information to be disclosed and that when more questions are raised "I shall also seek to set forth the facts known to me with respect to those questions."

Ziegler said that the President would hold a news conference "in the very near future" to reply to questions.