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Nixon Asks Nation To Show Fairness

By R. W. APPLE Jr.
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WASHINGTON, Sept. 25— President Nixon appealed to the American people tonight to give Vice President Agnew “the basic, decent consideration and presumption of innocence that are both his right and his due.”

At the end of a day of furious rumors, counterrumors, announcements and denials, the White House issued a 250-word written statement that consti-

Text of White House statement is printed on Page 23.

tuted Mr. Nixon’s strongest endorsement of his Vice President since Mr. Agnew’s legal difficulties began.

The President called the Vice President to the Oval Office this morning for an hour-and-fifteen-minute meeting. Referring to that conversation in his statement, Mr. Nixon said:

“The Vice President again, as he had done in our previous meetings, denied the charges that have been made against him.”

Mr. Agnew, the President continued, “has served his country with dedication and distinc-

tion and has won the respect of millions of Americans for the candor and courage with which he has addressed the controversial issues of our time.” Now, the President said, Mr. Agnew faces a “difficult period.”

The Vice President’s struggle for political survival appeared to be heading toward a climax with Mr. Nixon’s statement, a decision to send evidence to a Baltimore grand jury and Mr. Agnew’s subsequent request for a Congressional investigation.

Evaluation of Inquiry

Mr. Nixon—whose assistants have been unofficially and indirectly suggesting, then officially denying, that Mr. Agnew should resign—met at 8:30 o’clock this morning with Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson and the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Criminal Division, Henry E. Petersen, to receive an evaluation of the Agnew investigation.

Then, for the first time since the Vice President was accused of having accepted kickbacks while Governor of Maryland,

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