

White House Continues Full Support of Gray

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By a Washington Post Staff Writer

KEY BISCANE, March 23—The White House is continuing to support fully the nomination of L. Patrick Gray III as director of the FBI, deputy press secretary Gerad Warren said today.

[In Washington, resumption of Senate hearings on Gray's nomination were put off until the week after next in an apparent strategy move by his supporters, the Associated Press reported. AP said supporters wanted to see whether the administration would use "some muscle" to get votes for Gray.]

On Thursday, Gray had testified it was "probably correct" that White House counsel John Dean III had lied when he told the FBI he had to see if a key figure in the Watergate case had a White House office.

The charge had been raised by Senate Majority Whip Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.). The White House, in a statement, issued in Washington, called Byrd's charge "Reprehensible, unfortunate, unfair and incorrect," but made no reference to Gray's agreement with the accusation.

Warren was asked if the White House was not in effect also rebuking Gray. He replied:

"What we are doing with the statement is saying very forthrightly that Dean did not lie or mislead an agent of the FBI. Any reference to the effect that he did is incorrect."

As for Gray's nomination: "the expressions of support which are on the record are on the record. I am not changing those expressions today."