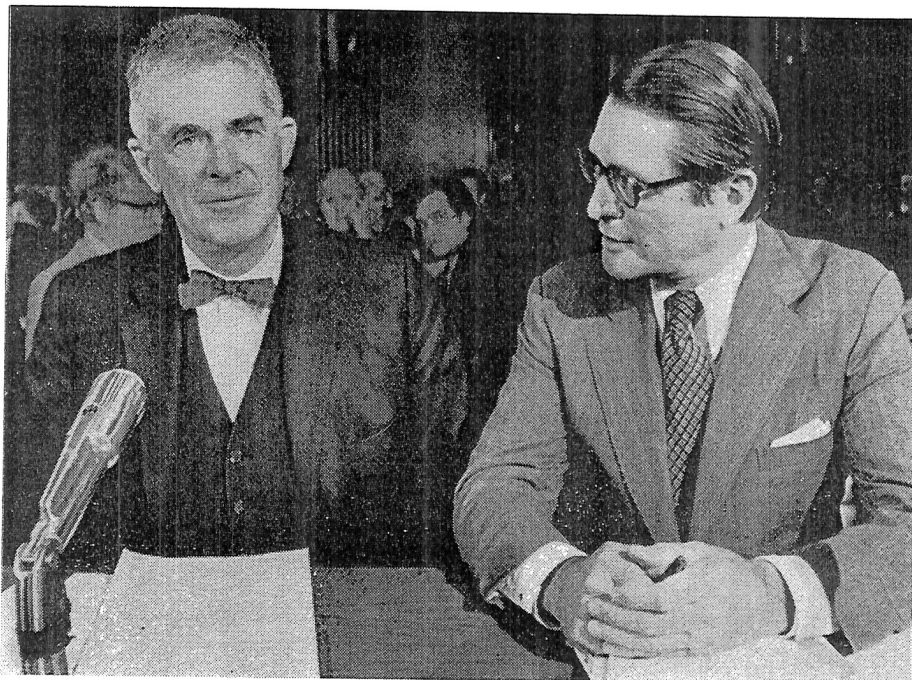


gressional committees on their rounds that Mr. Nixon had never asked them if it were true. Instead, as they told it, Haldeman and Ehrlichman had simply asserted that the agency might be compromised if the FBI nosed around in the Mexican money-laundering operation that ultimately bankrolled the Water-buggers; Walters in fact quoted Haldeman in a memo as having said it was "the President's wish" that they tell Gray to call off his agents. There were continuing intimations, moreover, that some of the President's men—far from trying to protect the CIA—wanted it to take the rap for the Watergate bugging and thus smother the whole affair in a national-security blanket. Mr. Nixon said he had no part of any such scheme. It apparently survived nevertheless: McCord, an ex-CIA technician, sent the agency several anonymous but easily traceable letters between July 1972 and January 1973 warning that the White House was trying to hang the rap on them.

The white paper as a whole was in one sense a homecoming for the President to the politics of national security—a theme that has threaded through his entire quarter-century in government. He fairly glowed while delivering it to the assembly of POW's the next afternoon in an arm-waving, flag-and-country speech; that night, the ex-prisoners and their wives and sweethearts came over to the White House for an all-star gala (Sammy Davis Jr., Bob Hope, Joey Heatherton, Irving Berlin, Vic Damone, Ricardo Montalban), and the whole crowd sang "God Bless America."

But the statement was in another sense a measure of how badly the bur-



Cox, Richardson: The question was 'a kind of sleaziness'

geoning scandal has diminished Mr. Nixon's options: national security was perhaps his last available defense. He had long since abandoned his position that none of his people were involved; now, he was fighting for his own personal survival. The foxhole no longer had room for anybody else, not even Haldeman or Ehrlichman; they were gently but unmistakably cast out.

Some close readers of the text guessed that Mr. Nixon's delicacy in doing so, and his omission of any mention at all of

Mitchell's ill fortune, might reflect the probability that his future now rests on their continuing loyalty under the klieg lights and the drumfire questioning yet ahead. Dean remains a danger, though some Nixonians were satisfied that the worst tales he can tell have already been told. "It would take one of the big three—Haldeman, Ehrlichman or Mitchell—to get him," said a former Nixon operative, "and I don't see any of them turning on him at this point."

If he was troubled by the dangers

SPREADING STAIN: JUSTICE ... FBI ... CIA ... STATE ... SEC

The spreading stain of Watergate has dealt a punishing blow to the prestige and authority of the White House, but it has tarnished other agencies of the government as well. The damage so far:

■ **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE:** Former Attorney General John Mitchell conducted strategy sessions in his office at which G. Gordon Liddy reportedly proposed "mugging, bugging, kidnaping, and even a prostitution squad," and James McCord Jr. says Liddy told him that Mitchell specifically approved the Watergate break-in. Robert Mardian, Mitchell's protégé formerly in charge of the department's Internal Security Division, is said to have opened the department's files to Liddy and E. Howard Hunt a year before the break-in. McCord says he received daily reports on the comings and goings of Democratic Presidential candidates from Mardian's unit. Mitchell was indicted in the Vesco influence-peddling case. His successor, Richard Kleindienst, who has managed somehow to stay clear of the taint so far, was forced nonetheless to resign on April 30 after learning

how many of his close associates had been implicated.

■ **THE FBI:** Former acting director L. Patrick Gray III has admitted giving White House counselor John W. Dean III free access to Watergate files, even after he began to suspect Dean and others of manipulating the FBI and the CIA in the cover-up. Gray accepted and destroyed two files from burglar E. Howard Hunt's White House safe, given to him by John Ehrlichman and Dean. Gray also allowed Ehrlichman to cancel a meeting he had arranged with CIA director Richard Helms to compare notes on the cover-up—and he never scheduled another.

■ **THE CIA:** Two Watergate burglars, McCord and Hunt, were ex-CIA men who had served nineteen and 21 years with the agency. The CIA provided Hunt and Liddy with wigs, voice distorters, false papers and a special camera to use in the Ellsberg burglary. Former CIA director Richard Helms agreed to give the White House "plumbers" a psychiatric profile of Ellsberg assembled

from CIA files, but later refused further aid. Deputy CIA director Vernon A. Walters, under orders from Presidential aides H.R. Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Dean, helped to stall an FBI investigation of the financing of the Watergate mission. There was a concerted White House effort to pin the bugging on the CIA, but Helms never protested to Mr. Nixon or reported these activities to the CIA's Congressional watchdogs.

■ **DEPARTMENT OF STATE:** Under orders from the White House, Hunt was given access to 240 secret State Department cables from which he falsified documents linking John F. Kennedy to the assassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem.

■ **THE SEC:** After a New York grand jury reported that he had improperly handled an SEC complaint against indicted financier Robert Vesco, SEC chairman G. Bradford Cook resigned. His predecessor, William J. Casey, now an Under Secretary of State, was also under fire last week for SEC decisions involving Vesco and ITT.