

Mr. Hoover vetoed his own plan, but it raises two others:

1. Why was Mr. Nixon's verbal order not enough for Mr. Hoover?

2. Considering Mr. Nixon's belief in its necessity to national security, why did he let the plan lapse for want of his signature? The only answer I can think of to the first question is that Mr. Hoover suspected that should repercussions arise, Mr. Nixon would not admit giving his order. Mr. Nixon's refusal to write his order indicates that Mr. Hoover's fears were well founded.

I can think of two possible answers to the second question. Either Mr. Nixon lied on May 22 when he claimed that the plan was essential to national security, or else he placed his own security above the nation's. Either conclusion is disturbing.

Other, equally disturbing conclusions are implicit in several other portions of the May 22 statement; indeed, in the other statements as well. The purpose of this letter, however, is not to point out discrepancies, and not only to ask why Mr. Nixon's various defenses have not received more thorough analyses. Rather, it is to point out that these defenses haven't come close to answering the questions as to his involvement, and to suggest a procedure which may do so.

To this end, I suggest that Mr. Nixon submit himself to an extensive cross-examination by several representatives of a number of groups with a legitimate interest in the case. Specifically I am not suggesting a press conference. That, while welcome, would contribute little or no new information. I am suggesting a series of unrestricted interrogations by at least three representatives of each of the following groups:

1. The Senate Select Committee
2. The Watergate grand jury
3. The press (including at least one representative each from The New York Times and The Washington Post)
4. Common Cause
5. The Democratic National Committee
6. Public Citizen
7. Other duly constituted committees of Congress. Preferably, there would be no limit to the time or scope of the questioning. As a minimum, each group should be assigned two periods, three days each, one week apart. This would allow time to research prior to follow-up questioning.

Ideally, Mr. Nixon should volunteer for this ordeal, as it is hard to see any other way in which his innocence can be established beyond doubt. Failing this, a joint congressional resolution might force his appearance.

ROBERT GELMAN.

Silver Spring.

Part 6130/77
"Grave Conclusion"

I am curious as to why no one, to my knowledge, seems to have drawn the grave conclusions which are clearly implicit in Mr. Nixon's statement of May 22. They concern the ostensibly aborted 1970 plan to gather intelligence on domestic activities.

According to Mr. Nixon,

1. This intelligence gathering activity was necessary to protect the security of the U.S.A.
2. The plan was developed by a committee headed by J. Edgar Hoover.
3. Mr. Nixon approved the plan, and ordered its implementation.
4. Mr. Hoover refused to carry out this order.
5. Mr. Nixon withdrew the plan. Subsequent information indicates that Mr. Nixon's fourth point above, was incomplete, at the very least. Apparently, Mr. Hoover's refusal was based on his desire to obtain the order in writing, which Mr. Nixon refused to do. This answers the question of why