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No Denial

In recent weeks, The Washington Post, Time magazine, and other publications have disclosed details of how officials in the White House and in the Committee to Re-elect the President apparently planned and paid for a complex, secret campaign of surveillance, sabotage and espionage against their political opponents. The details, as reported have been appalling. It is sad and almost incredible that high officials of the Federal Government could even contemplate—much less carry out—such degrading maneuvers.

But equally appalling has been the thin-lipped determination of the White House and the G.O.P. campaign organization to hide from the public the facts of this case insofar as they know them. It now appears that President Nixon's personal attorney, his appointments secretary, his Deputy Director of Communications, and other senior aides as well as former members of his Cabinet are somehow involved. The bland, sweeping denials of earlier days are no longer plausible. Instead the Administration has counterattacked with separate statements by the White House press secretary, the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, and Mr. Nixon's campaign manager. Each of these spokesmen denounced the press for printing stories about the scandal.

Significantly, however, none of the three was willing to deny the substance of the charges or even to answer questions about them. As a result, their comments are readily recognized as self-serving attempts to distract attention. This public relations fakery will no longer satisfy. The whole truth is what is required.