

'Necessary First Step' Wins Applause

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President Nixon's shakeup of the Justice and Defense Departments and the White House staff yesterday spell short-term confusion in government and the possibility of significant long-term changes in the operating style and substantive program of his second administration.

Politicians of both parties applauded the President's actions, but warned that they did not, by themselves, answer the doubts and questions raised by the Watergate political espionage case.

By accepting the resigna-

tion of the Attorney General and three of his own top aides and then moving Secretary of Defense Elliot L. Richardson over to head the Justice Department, Mr. Nixon removed the structural underpinnings of the entire domestic side of his administration.

Members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, said they hoped the new Nixon team—its key members still unknown—would bring in a spirit of openness and cooperation with Capitol Hill.

But the actions announced in advance of his evening speech did not end the immediate and still mounting

crisis of confidence for the President—as reflected in the fresh demand from members of both parties for an independent investigation of Watergate and related charges.

Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) said the resignations of White House aides H.R. (Bob) Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman and John W. Dean III represented the kind of action that "should have been taken when those in whom a President has placed his trust have failed to merit that trust."

But Democratic governors meeting in Huron, Ohio, and members of both par-

ties on Capitol Hill renewed their demands for the naming of a special prosecutor, drawn from outside the ranks of the administration, to probe the political espionage charges.

With their chairman, Maryland Gov. Marvin Mandel, scoffing at Richardson as "a designated pinch-hitter" in the Watergate lineup, Washington Post correspondent Jules Witcover reported from Huron that 16 Democratic governors unanimously called on Mr. Nixon to turn the case over to a special, independent prosecutor.

Sen. Marlow Cook (R-Ky.) used the same term in de-

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scribing Richardson's role, according to The Post's Senate correspondent, Spencer Rich, and added—like Michigan's Republican Gov. William Milliken—that the resignations were "long overdue."

More than half-a-dozen lawmakers of both parties said they had drafted legislation calling for a special prosecutor after weighing the angry reaction of the constituents they encountered during last week's congressional recess.

For the first time since the widening political scandal touched top associates of the President, a major congressional figure openly raised the subject of presidential impeachment.

Post correspondent Mary Russell reported that Rep. John Moss (D-Calif.), a 20-year veteran and member of his party's House steering and policy committee, suggested the creation of a special select committee to investigate the possible involvement of the President in the Watergate affair.

"I am not saying we should move to impeach," Moss said. "I am merely saying that we should be prepared."

Noting that the House has the constitutional responsibility to consider a bill of impeachment, Moss said, "We should have the materials in hand and all the documents necessary."

"I find it most difficult to concede that the President was not aware of Watergate," Moss said.

Moss discussed his move with House Speaker Carl Albert but said "the Speaker is not prepared to make any commitment."

Albert himself took a cautious line with reporters, saying he hoped the President's actions would presage more cooperation with Congress, instead of the "haughtiness on the part of some people" he said he had noticed in the past.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield rejected both talk of impeachment and calls for a special prosecutor, but noted that the Watergate investigation would continue through both a federal grand jury and a Senate committee.

While congressional attention focused on the proper forum and leadership for further investigations, members of the executive branch speculated about the shakeup of government following the latest and widest round of resignations.

About 50 top-level presidential appointment jobs in various departments and 23 ambassadorships have remained vacant since the start of the second term last January.

Now, in a few days, Mr. Nixon has accepted the resignations of his chief of staff, his domestic adviser, his counsel, the Attorney General and the acting director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

With some of the better-known former administration aides like Melvin R. Laird and Robert H. Finch

mestic policy manager and trouble-shooter.

Leonard Garment, a former seems likely to be further administrative confusion in both departments.

At the White House itself, no replacements have been named for either Haldeman, who directed the flow of paper and people to the President's office and coordinated all staff activities, or Ehrlichman, the former, do-declining bids to return to Washington in this crisis, the President has been forced to play musical chairs with the vacancies.

William D. Ruckelshaus moved over from the directorship of the Environmental Protection Agency to replace L. Patrick Gray III as head of the FBI, specifying that he would take that responsibility only temporarily but leaving a vacancy in his old job.

Richardson now moves from the Defense Department—where he began only three months ago—to replace Richard Kleindienst, command of the Watergate investigation.

The immediate effect the departing Attorney General. But the White House announcement said each man would remain temporarily in his old post, until a replacement for Richardson is found, except that Richardson will take immediate mer law partner of Mr. Nixon's who has played a subsidiary staff role, becomes

Dean's temporary replacement as presidential counsel, but, again, the long-term staff function remains unassigned.

The fact that Richardson, Ruckelshaus and Garment all come from the "liberal wing" of the administration could point to a future shift of policy direction, but most White House aides yesterday strongly discounted that interpretation.

"They were chosen because they were clean, not because they were liberal," said one staff member. Richardson, who is viewed by administration colleagues as having presidential ambitions, moves into a post where he can possibly make a reputation for himself with the country as a scourge of corruption and possibly earn the gratitude of the President in the process. But the Justice Department job could also become a hot seat less comfortable than any of his previous posts in Defense, State or the Health, Education and Welfare department.

Other possible contenders for the 1976 nomination—Vice President Agnew, New York Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller, California Gov. Ronald Reagan and former Secretary of the Treasury John B. Connally—were conspicuously silent on yesterday's developments.

But there was no dearth of comment from others, as the news of the resignations



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Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.), right, rejects talk of impeachment and calls for special prosecutor. At left is Sen. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.).

ricocheted around Washington and across the country. Most Republicans sought to seal the President from the contagion of the scandal while praising his cleanup actions, but some GOP loyalists joined Democrats in stressing the need for further disclosures.

The Post's House correspondent, Richard L. Lyons, said one of the more acerbic comments of the day came from conservative Republican Rep. William J. Scherle, who said of Haldeman and Ehrlichman: "Good riddance."

More characteristic of Republican reaction were the words of House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford (R-Mich.), who called the resignations "a necessary first step in clearing the air on the Watergate affair."

"I have the greatest confidence in the President and I am absolutely positive he had nothing to do with this mess," Ford added.

Rep. Jack Edwards (R-Ala.), secretary of the House Republican Conference, was more cautious than Ford, saying the resignations "help clear the air, but they

don't solve the problem. We don't now know who is guilty. For the good of the country, we need to get to the bottom of it quickly."

Rep. John McFall of California, the House Democratic whip, also stressed the need to have it "settled soon . . . so the stability of

the country is not damaged."

But another California Democrat, Rep. Jerome Waldie, suggested it was too late for that. "President Nixon will be enormously crippled for the rest of his term," Waldie said, "and that is a tragedy for both the nation and the American people."

On both sides of Capitol Hill, the debate about the need for a special prosecutor crossed party lines, but at the Democratic Governors' meeting in Ohio, there was no dissent from the demand for an outsider's taking command of the federal investigation.

Gov. John J. Gilligan of Ohio, the host, said the Democratic state executives "are convinced that the Justice Department has been so compromised, including the FBI, that unless we get a special prosecutor into the field we'll never restore the confidence of the people in their government."

'Like Earthquake,'

Rep. Gude Says

"It's like an earthquake, isn't it?" Rep. Gilbert Gude (R-Md.) said yesterday after President Nixon's announcement that he had accepted the resignations of White House assistants H.R. Halde- man, John D. Ehrlichman and John W. Dean III and of Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst.

Before the president's announcement, Gude had issued a statement in which he said, "If the president is to remain effective, he must clean up Watergate and rid himself of all persons involved, as in an honor-code violation at West Point."

"I'm certainly pleased that the president is acting in this matter, but I still feel that we should have a Senate investigation under Sen. (Sam) Ervin's committee," Gude said after the announcement. "He (the president) has to satisfy the American public that he is indeed coming to grips with the situation and that we can have confidence in what he's done."

Excerpts from reactions by other area congressmen included:

• Rep. Marjorie S. Holt (R-Md.): "This (affair) is one of the dangers of an executive or legislator closeting himself in an ivory tower and becoming too far removed from the people and from the activities of staff."

• Rep. Joel T. Broyhill (R-Va.): "The flood of resignations . . . is a tragic epoch in American history. The trial of the wrongdoers

must now be vigorously prosecuted to completely remove all of them from the American political scene."

• Rep. Lawrence J. Hogan (R-Md.): "I don't agree with those who say this is going to have deep ramifications in the success of the Republican Party . . . American voters today are sophisticated enough to know there are good and bad people in both parties."