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# Clemency Report Also Called False

By Austin Scott  
and Lou Cannon

Washington Post Staff Writers

KEY BISCAIYNE, Fla.,

May 7—The White House today, in a statement personally approved by the President, issued a denial of any involvement by Mr. Nixon in the Watergate bugging case.

"Any suggestion that the President was aware of the Watergate operation is untrue," said Deputy Press Secretary Gerald L. Warren. "Any suggestion that the President participated in any coverup activities is untrue. Any suggestion that the President ever authorized the offering of clemency to anyone in this case is also false."

Warren was asked subsequently whether he intended by his statement to draw any distinction that Mr. Nixon was aware of a coverup even though he did not participate in it.

He replied by referring to the President's April 30 television address and by saying he could not go beyond it.

In that speech to the nation on the Watergate affair Mr. Nixon said he "repeatedly asked those conducting the investigation whether there was any reason to believe the members of my administration were in any way involved."

The President said he had received "repeated assurances that they were not" and that he remained convinced that the denials were true until March.

Today's White House statement did not address itself directly to the question of whether the President had advance knowledge of a broad campaign of political espionage and sabotage, of which the Watergate bugging was only a part, according to investigators. Warren said the use of the term "Watergate operation" in the statement "extends to all the matters that are now under discussion." He did not elaborate.

The espionage and sabotage employed in the 1972

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## PRESIDENT, From A1

Nixon campaign, according to investigators and White House sources, represented a basic strategy of the effort to re-elect the President and was designed to help Sen. George S. McGovern secure the Democratic presidential nomination. McGovern was considered the easiest candidate for Mr. Nixon to defeat in the eyes of the White House.

Warren's denial was in response to questions about a Newsweek magazine story which said that John Dean III, the President's former counsel, was prepared to testify that Mr. Nixon had congratulated him for keeping a lid on the scandal.

The magazine also said that John Ehrlichman, the President's ousted domestic affairs adviser, had emerged from a conference with Mr. Nixon and promised executive clemency for E. Howard Hunt, one of the convicted Watergate burglars.

Warren declined to comment on specific allegations in the article on grounds that any comment could "infringe on the rights of innocent individuals," a position taken by White House spokesmen on Watergate questions ever since the President's speech last week.

On these grounds Warren declined today to comment on whether the White House is looking into alleged participation by the Central Intelligence Agency in rifling the files of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist. And Warren also declined comment on Martha Mitchell's suggestion that Mr. Nixon should resign.

Warren said his statement, though not the specific language, denying the President's involvement in the Watergate case was authorized by Mr. Nixon. Asked whether the statement was subject to being declared "inoperative," as

White House Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler has described earlier White House statements about the Watergate case, Warren replied:

"That was different . . . this came from the President."

In other developments Mr. Nixon summoned former Treasury Secretary John B. Connally to the Florida White House for a conference amid reports from close Connally associates that he was reluctant to take a post in the Nixon administration. Connally gave up his lifelong Democratic allegiance last week and officially joined the Republican Party.

The President also met with his newly named interim chief of staff, Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. to discuss staff operations.

While Haig was meeting with the President, Haig's office asked White House senior staff members to suggest "action plans" for specific presidential activities which would demonstrate that Mr. Nixon is still in command of the government.

The request was relayed through Kenneth Cole, now the administration's No. 1 domestic affairs official, and the responses were requested by 4 p.m. today.

One White House source said the action demonstrated that Mr. Nixon had no intention of resigning.

Meanwhile in Washington, Transportation Secretary Claude S. Brinegar said the Watergate scandal was appalling but should not be allowed to destroy the credibility of government officials who were not involved.

"I had nothing to do with the committee to Re-Elect the President," Brinegar said in an interview with United Press International. "And I don't work for John Ehrlichman or H. R. Halde- man. I work for the Presi-

dent. I am trying to do my part as a cabinet officer . . ."

## Kleindienst Denies Story On White House Taps

United Press International

Outgoing Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst denied "without qualification" yesterday a Time magazine story that he knew about wiretaps on telephones of White House aides or reporters that the magazine said were authorized by then Attorney General John N. Mitchell prior to 1971.

In a letter to Time editor Hedley Donovan, Kleindienst said that no telephone conversation took place between him and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover as reported by Time in a story this week concerning the alleged wiretaps.

Time reported that Hoover, in a telephone conversation with then Deputy Attorney General Kleindienst, had threatened to reveal the existence of the illegal taps if President Nixon attempted to force him out of office. Shortly after that

call, Time said, the official documents authorizing the bugging disappeared from Hoover's personal files.

Kleindienst said, "Without qualification of any kind, I categorically state that no such telephone conversation took place between me and Mr. Hoover. I further categorically state that I had no personal knowledge about such taps."

The magazine quoted a Justice Department official as saying: "Hoover used those wiretap authorizations to blackmail the Nixon administration. As long as he had the papers (documenting the taps), they couldn't get rid of him."

The wiretaps were allegedly authorized by Mitchell on orders from the President in an attempt to discover the source of "leaks" of government secrets to the press.

Hoover discovered that the record of the taps had vanished in the spring of 1971, Time said, but the administration made no further moves to force him out of office.