

# Gray Testifies He Told Nixon July 6 Staff

## SAYS HE ALLOWED A LAG IN INQUIRY

Confirms a Plea by Walters  
That F.B.I. Action Would  
Jeopardize C.I.A. Role

By MARJORIE HUNTER  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 24—L. Patrick Gray 3d, former acting director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, told a Senate Appropriation subcommittee today that he had warned President Nixon last July 6 that "people on your staff are trying to mortally wound you" by hampering an F.B.I. inquiry into the Watergate affair.

Mr. Gray also testified that he had allowed the Watergate investigation to lag for two weeks before he talked to the President because of "confusion" over whether it might interfere with covert operations of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Emerging from seclusion after many weeks, Mr. Gray underwent more than four hours of intensive questioning about Watergate. He was not available for comment either before or after the hearing. He had slipped into the committee room more than an hour early, dined on a sandwich in the room during the luncheon break and later departed by a side door.

His testimony, recounted later by Senator John L. McClellan of Arkansas, the subcommittee chairman, conflicted in one major respect with that given several Congressional committees in the last few weeks by Lieut. Gen. Vernon A. Walters, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence.

### Haldeman Role Cited

General Walters had said in an affidavit that on June 23, he was ordered by H. R. Haldeman, then White House chief of staff, to persuade Mr. Gray to call off the F.B.I. investigation into campaign funds "laundered" through a Mexico City bank.

The general said that he went to see Mr. Gray that same day and told him he had been "directed by top White House officials" to tell the F.B.I. that further investigation "into the Mexican aspects of the Watergate episode might jeopardize some of the agency's covert actions in that area."

Today, according to Senator McClellan, Mr. Gray said that General Walters had not informed him at that meeting that he was acting under White House orders. Mr. Gray said he let the investigation lag because he thought covert C.I.A. operations in Mexico might indeed be jeopardized, as suggested by General Walters.

"Mr. Gray kept telling us today that during that period he was confused and doubting, that he was uneasy and un-



Associated Press

L. Patrick Gray 3d, former acting F.B.I. director, before Senate Appropriations subcommittee yesterday.

certain if the C.I.A. might not really have had some interest in the Watergate affair," Senator McClellan said.

Aside from this conflict in testimony by Mr. Gray and General Walters, their versions of what subsequently happened appeared to be basically the same.

Mr. Gray's recollections of his July 6 telephone conversation with the President were transcribed verbatim during today's hearing and later made public by Senator McClellan.

Mr. Nixon had touched on this telephone conversation in his statement earlier this week about the Watergate affair, but Mr. Gray's version is far more explicit.

### Call to Nixon

Mr. Gray said today that on July 6, General Walters came to his office and informed him that C.I.A. operations would not be jeopardized by the F.B.I. inquiry.

Mr. Gray said that he and the general decided that the C.I.A. and F.B.I. were being "used" to hamper the investigation and they agreed that President Nixon should know what was going on. General Walters had also said this in his testimony.

Just before they parted that morning, Mr. Gray testified that he turned to General Walters and said: "Dick, you should telephone the President because you know him better than I do."

General Walters has said that he did not telephone the President, then or later, about the matter.

However, Mr. Gray placed a call that morning to Clark MacGregor, a White House aide, who was with President Nixon in California.

Mr. Gray told the committee today that he said to Mr. MacGregor:

"Dick Walters and I are uneasy and concerned because of the confusion and uncertainty in determining whether or not there is C.I.A. interest in people the F.B.I. wishes to interview or there is not C.I.A. in-

terest in these people.

"We both feel that people on the White House staff are careless and indifferent in their use of both the F.B.I. and C.I.A. and we have the feeling that this can be injurious to both of our agencies and can be wounding to the President."

### 'Careless and Indifferent'

Mr. Gray said that he then asked Mr. MacGregor to inform the President and "he said that he would handle it."

Just 37 minutes later, according to Mr. Gray, President Nixon called him to congratulate him on the F.B.I. handling of an airline hijacking. Mr. Gray said that he told the President:

"Mr. President, there is something I want to speak to you about. Dick Walters and I feel that people on your staff are trying to mortally wound you by using the C.I.A. and F.B.I. and by confusing the question of C.I.A. interest in, or not in, people the F.B.I. wishes to interview. I have just talked to Clark MacGregor and asked him to speak to you about this."

Mr. Gray then quoted the President as saying: "Pat, you just continue to conduct your aggressive and thorough investigation."

Mr. Gray testified that the investigation was then resumed, without further interference.

President Nixon, in his version of that conversation with Mr. Gray, said he had called to congratulate the F.B.I. on its handling of the airline hijacking. The President then continued:

"During the conversation, Mr. Gray discussed with me the progress of the Watergate investigation, and I asked him whether he had talked with General Walters. Mr. Gray said that he had, and that General Walters had assured him that the C.I.A. was not involved. In the discussion, Mr. Gray suggested that the matter of the Watergate might lead higher. I told him to press ahead with his investigation."

TIMES, FRIDAY, MAY 25, 1973

Aides Were 'Trying to Mortally Wound You'

C 17