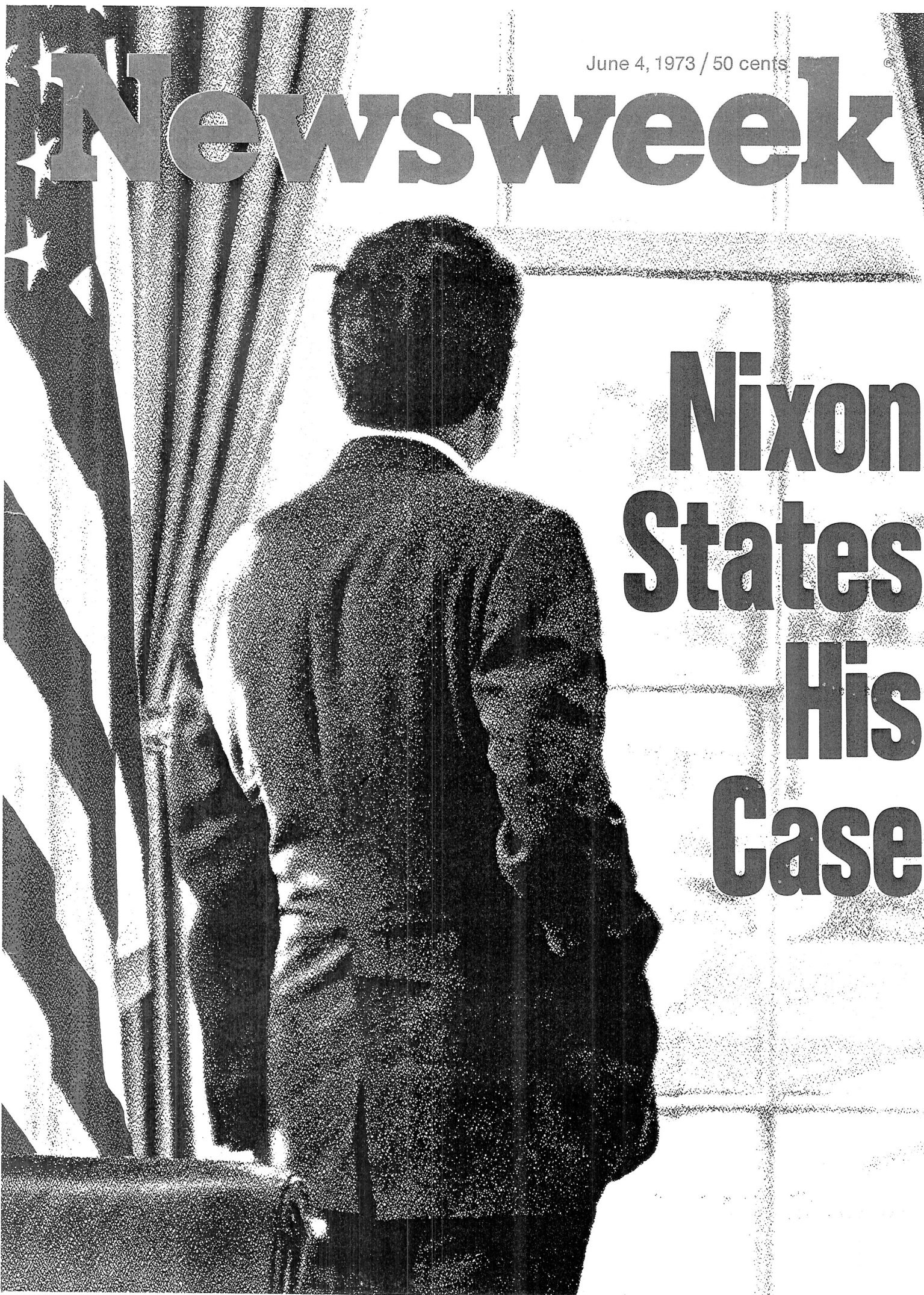


June 4, 1973 / 50 cents

Newsweek

Nixon States His Case





Magruder: The man who turned

President's accounting, during the spring and summer of 1970—a time of proliferating campus riots, terrorist bombings and open warfare between “guerrilla-style groups” and the police. Intelligence gathering, Mr. Nixon said, was in trouble at the time because the FBI had abandoned “certain types of undercover operations”—including burglaries—and because the aging Hoover was in the process of breaking off relations with every other agency in the field.

Breaking and Entering

The President convened a crisis meeting of the major intelligence agencies in June; they returned a report calling, among other things, for “surreptitious entry—breaking and entering, in effect—on specified categories of targets” in the national-security field. The President approved the plans in July but called them off five days later on Hoover's protests, and they were never implemented (box). Still, said Mr. Nixon, some of the plans involved foreign intelligence matters, and the documents describing them—the John Dean papers—remain “extremely sensitive” to this day.

The vacuum in intelligence gathering continued, Mr. Nixon said, and he moved the White House into it, first trying to ramrod the established agencies with a special Intelligence Evaluation Committee—and later, in 1971, organizing the secret in-house gumshoe squad known formally as the Special Investigation Unit and informally as the “plumbers.”

The unit, headed by Egil Krogh and staffed by Waterbuggers-to-be G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt, was first assigned to the leak of the Pentagon papers by Daniel Ellsberg to The New York Times. It looked at the time, Mr. Nixon said, like a “security leak of unprecedented proportion”; he directed

Krogh to have the unit “find out all it could about Mr. Ellsberg's associates and his motives”—and the burglary at the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist followed.

Mr. Nixon insisted he never authorized the break-in and in fact had it reported to the judge in the Ellsberg trial after learning about it this spring. But he added that, given the stress he put on national security, he could “understand how highly motivated individuals could have felt justified in engaging in specific activities I would have disapproved.”

When the political scandals of 1972 broke, Mr. Nixon said, his single fear was not that the truth of Watergate might out but that the inquiry might blunder into covert national-security operations. His fears were quickened by the involvement of one of his plumbers, Hunt, in the Waterbugging, and by a report to the President—he didn't say from whom —“that there was a possibility of CIA involvement in some way.” He accordingly told his two top hands, H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, to see that the investigation was restricted to Watergate and prevented from exposing either CIA or plumber operations. Four weeks ago, in his TV speech on the scandals, Mr. Nixon embraced Haldeman and Ehrlichman even as he bade them farewell; now, naming no names, he said some of his people “may have gone beyond my directives . . . in order to cover up any involvement they or certain others might have had in Watergate.”

When the Shouting Stops

The first audience for the statement was the White House press corps, a body now almost at open war with the Administration's front men—and the newsmen received it with almost unprecedented ferocity. Garment and the President's newly appointed special counsel on Watergate, J. Fred Buzhardt, took turns not answering questions about the 1970 breaking-and-entering plans. “I have no authority to declassify the document,” Buzhardt finally protested. “Classified or otherwise,” one reporter shouted back, “do you realize you are leaving unanswered the question of whether or not the President of the United States

(Continued on Page 20)



F. Brennan with apologies to Charles Schultz

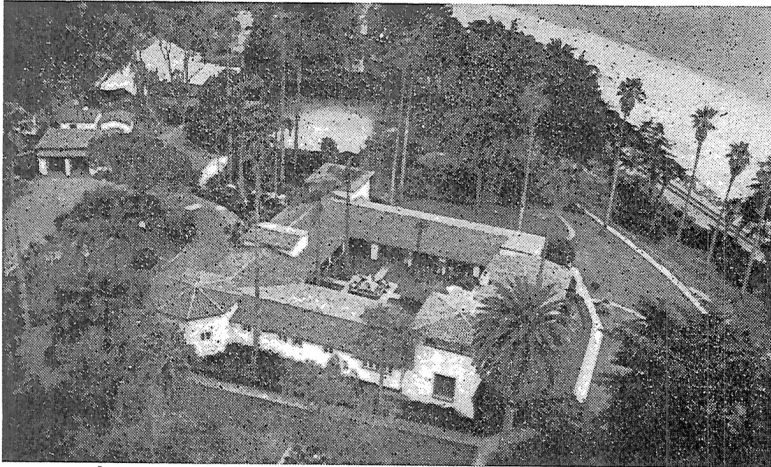
BLUEPRINT FOR A SUPER SECRET POLICE

In the low-key, bureaucratic language used by the President last week, they were “specific options for expanded intelligence operations.” What that really amounted to, however, was the most wide-ranging secret police operation ever authorized—however briefly—in the peacetime United States. It called for an unprecedented cooperative effort by the nation's most powerful intelligence agencies: the FBI, CIA, National Security Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency. And it paved the way for bug-ging, burglary, perhaps even blackmail by government agents against American citizens—among them Federal employees, antiwar activists, campus radicals and militant Black Panthers—as well as foreign students and diplomats.

The plan was operational for only five days in the summer of 1970, and the Administration says it was never implemented. But the potential was striking. “When you read it,” predicted a Congressional source, “it will send chills up and down your spine.” More chilling still, there was mounting evidence last week that the plan had helped spawn Watergate, the break-in at Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office—and a string of other burglaries by clandestine operatives of the Nixon Administration.

Risks: Under the original plan, the FBI was authorized to take on foreign intelligence assignments inside the U.S. (embassy break-ins, for example), while the CIA got a green light to run its own domestic operations—including, *Newsweek* learned, spying on high U.S. officials who were suspected of being security risks. One of the proposals would have created a new cadre of “super CIA agents” for domestic missions, operatives who could not be traced to the agency and whose identity and assignments would be concealed from all but the highest agency officials. “The whole purpose,” said one source familiar with the document, “was to try to get information on matters the Administration felt endangered national security by whatever means were considered necessary. But a lot of what was proposed didn't deal with national security at all. In many ways it seems like just an excuse for domestic spying.”

Similar activities had been carried out routinely by the FBI against foreign agents from World War II through the mid-60s. What made the new strategy so significant was the way it broadened the target to include domestic radicals and other citizens whose direct ties to foreign governments were questionable



AP

BIG DEALS IN SAN CLEMENTE

As if Watergate weren't enough, yet another embarrassment bobbed up last week to haunt President Nixon—the curious story of how he came to be lord of the manor at La Casa Pacifica, his palmy, 29-acre estate in San Clemente, Calif. Questions about the deal had been bobbing up ever since Mr. Nixon bought the mansion that

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

is now the Western White House in 1969 for \$1.5 million. Two weeks ago the Santa Ana Register reported that Mr. Nixon might have paid off the mortgage with money left over from his 1968 Presidential campaign. The report brought an angry denial from the White House.

But when the details were finally released last week, the story got curiously and curiously. As the White House told it, the original down payment was financed by a \$625,000 loan to the President from his friend Robert G. Abplanalp, the millionaire machinist who perfected the aerosol spray valve. The deal was handled by Mr. Nixon's former personal lawyer, Herbert Kalmbach, the man who ran the \$1.7 million campaign fund that was tapped in 1972 to pay the Watergate burglars.

Originally, Mr. Nixon had hoped to sell all but 5.9 acres of the property to a "suitable buyer"—perhaps the trustees of a proposed Nixon Presidential library. But as the White House told it last week, Abplanalp himself bought the land nearly two and a half years ago, for \$1,249,000. Oddly enough, no deed was recorded.

Whatever questions remained, the President could boast of a notable deal. After all the intricacies were netted out, he owned one of the choicest homes in California for a total investment of \$374,514—and thus far he had actually paid just \$33,500.

(Continued from Page 18)

approved felonies?" Jeered another: "You certainly know enough about law to know that, Fred." At yet another point, a reporter demanded furiously when the President was going to submit to questioning himself; the answer, leaked informally later, was, not until the press stops shouting at his people.

The scene was ill-tempered, but the statement looked little better on second reading. It pledged at the outset not to put "a national security 'cover'" on Watergate—and proceeded to put one on parts of the Watergate cover-up and most of the collateral scandals as well. It moderated the President's position only enough to accommodate damaging evidence that had already come out and to keep other embarrassments—notably the Dean papers—bottled up.

What He Didn't Say

Otherwise, the statement pleaded Mr. Nixon's innocence of everything. It referred only glancingly or not at all to the related fast practices Watergate has come to stand for—the political dirty tricks, the under-the-table funding, the shredding and burnbagging of evidence, the influence-peddling case that brought a former Attorney General and a former Commerce Secretary under indictment. And it refused to acknowledge the clear linkages between the 1969-71 secret-police operations sanctioned by the President and the 1972 political marauding that he says caught him by surprise. They had "no connection," said Mr. Nixon. But they did, in style, zeal, method, personnel—and soul.

The statement was vulnerable as well on point after specific point:

■ **The Hoover Problem:** The passage in the statement about the low estate of American intelligence gathering in the last days of J. Edgar Hoover amounted

to a confession by the President that he couldn't control or fire the man he held responsible. "If the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover wasn't dependable," one GOP senator asked, "why keep him on?" One well-wired source offered NEWSWEEK a reason: Hoover had in his files some materials regarded by the Administration as "very, very damaging to persons on the White House staff," and he was not above using them to insure his tenure in office. He served, in any case, until his death a year ago; his most private files were thereafter removed to his home by his deputy and lifelong friend Clyde Tolson and have never surfaced.

■ **The Ellsberg Break-in:** The President's apparent inability to cope with Hoover led in turn, by his own narrative, to the creation of his own security-police unit when the Pentagon papers broke. The available evidence suggested that he overreacted—that the publication of the papers was far more an embarrassment than a threat to national security and that the FBI in any event had known for more than a year that Ellsberg had been copying the documents. Mr. Nixon nevertheless put his plumbers on the case; his protest that he would never have approved a burglary in *this* national-security case sorted oddly with his admission that he had said yes to a whole run of them—at least in theory—the year before. His defense, indeed, rested on the odd proposition that he had been concerned enough about intelligence leaks to create a covert-operations unit, but not enough to ask thereafter what it was doing.

Mr. Nixon did not even mention that his black squad had drawn the CIA into the caper in a support role, in plain violation of the laws barring it from domestic operations. The agency's former director, Richard Helms, now in less-than-happy exile as ambassador to

Iran, and its surviving deputy director, Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters, toured Capitol Hill last week trying—apparently successfully—to persuade the agency's friends there that they went along reluctantly under White House pressure and even then were unaware that it was a burglary they were supporting. NEWSWEEK learned that the agency had in fact bugged one of its own offices the day plumber Hunt came to pick up his disguise, faked papers and other paraphernalia; the logs suggest that Hunt ducked questions about what he was up to and answered only that it was a high-level White House mission.

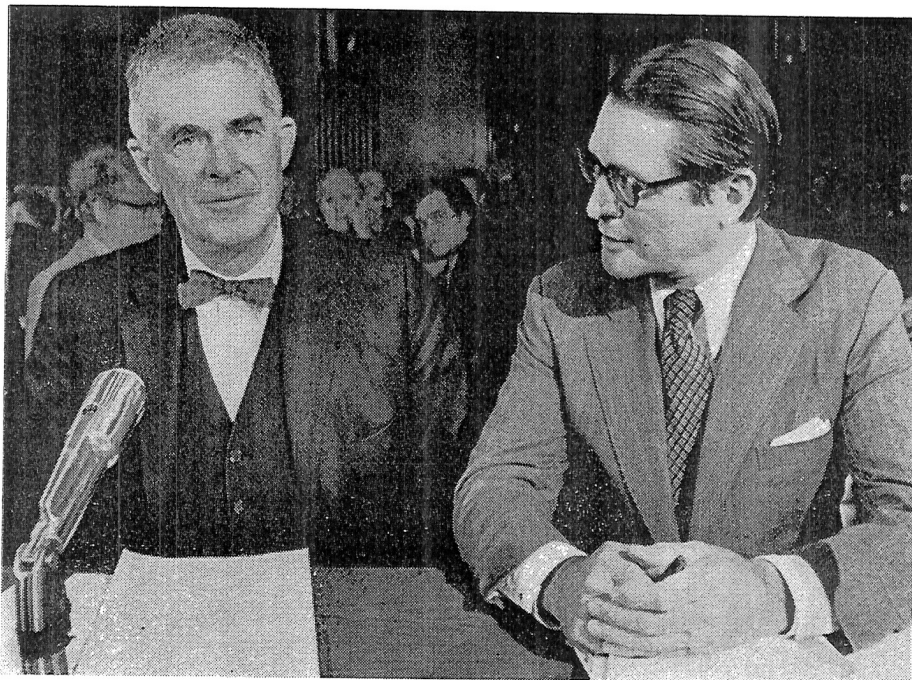
■ **The Ellsberg Cover-up:** Mr. Nixon did a fast semantic two-step suggesting that, far from trying to cover up the burglary, he had in fact ordered on April 25 that it be reported "immediately" to the Ellsberg trial judge, W. Matthew Byrne. But new evidence indicated that he had in fact been sitting on the information for a month—a silence that put a more damning cast than ever on the affair and on the President's credibility. The agent of his embarrassment was his new Attorney General, Elliot Richardson, who testified at his confirmation hearing that the President himself had mentioned having heard about the break-in from Dean in late March. At that time, the White House insisted, his information was still fragmentary. But the fact remained that the President had at least an inkling of the burglary when his man Ehrlichman twice offered the FBI directorship to Judge Byrne in early April—and when he himself chatted with the judge at one of the two trysts.

■ **The CIA Connection:** The President defended his having limited the Watergate investigation in part by citing his unattributed tip that the CIA might have been involved and should be protected. But both Helms and Walters told Con-

gressional committees on their rounds that Mr. Nixon had never asked them if it were true. Instead, as they told it, Haldeman and Ehrlichman had simply asserted that the agency might be compromised if the FBI nosed around in the Mexican money-laundering operation that ultimately bankrolled the Water-buggers; Walters in fact quoted Haldeman in a memo as having said it was "the President's wish" that they tell Gray to call off his agents. There were continuing intimations, moreover, that some of the President's men—far from trying to protect the CIA—wanted it to take the rap for the Watergate bugging and thus smother the whole affair in a national-security blanket. Mr. Nixon said he had no part of any such scheme. It apparently survived nevertheless: McCord, an ex-CIA technician, sent the agency several anonymous but easily traceable letters between July 1972 and January 1973 warning that the White House was trying to hang the rap on them.

The white paper as a whole was in one sense a homecoming for the President to the politics of national security—a theme that has threaded through his entire quarter-century in government. He fairly glowed while delivering it to the assembly of POW's the next afternoon in an arm-waving, flag-and-country speech; that night, the ex-prisoners and their wives and sweethearts came over to the White House for an all-star gala (Sammy Davis Jr., Bob Hope, Joey Heatherton, Irving Berlin, Vic Damone, Ricardo Montalban), and the whole crowd sang "God Bless America."

But the statement was in another sense a measure of how badly the bur-



Cox, Richardson: The question was 'a kind of sleaziness'

geoning scandal has diminished Mr. Nixon's options: national security was perhaps his last available defense. He had long since abandoned his position that none of his people were involved; now, he was fighting for his own personal survival. The foxhole no longer had room for anybody else, not even Haldeman or Ehrlichman; they were gently but unmistakably cast out.

Some close readers of the text guessed that Mr. Nixon's delicacy in doing so, and his omission of any mention at all of

Mitchell's ill fortune, might reflect the probability that his future now rests on their continuing loyalty under the klieg lights and the drumfire questioning yet ahead. Dean remains a danger, though some Nixonians were satisfied that the worst tales he can tell have already been told. "It would take one of the big three—Haldeman, Ehrlichman or Mitchell—to get him," said a former Nixon operative, "and I don't see any of them turning on him at this point."

If he was troubled by the dangers

SPREADING STAIN: JUSTICE... FBI... CIA... STATE... SEC

The spreading stain of Watergate has dealt a punishing blow to the prestige and authority of the White House, but it has tarnished other agencies of the government as well. The damage so far:

■ **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE:** Former Attorney General John Mitchell conducted strategy sessions in his office at which G. Gordon Liddy reportedly proposed "mugging, bugging, kidnaping, and even a prostitution squad," and James McCord Jr. says Liddy told him that Mitchell specifically approved the Watergate break-in. Robert Mardian, Mitchell's protégé formerly in charge of the department's Internal Security Division, is said to have opened the department's files to Liddy and E. Howard Hunt a year before the break-in. McCord says he received daily reports on the comings and goings of Democratic Presidential candidates from Mardian's unit. Mitchell was indicted in the Vesco influence-peddling case. His successor, Richard Kleindienst, who has managed somehow to stay clear of the taint so far, was forced nonetheless to resign on April 30 after learning

how many of his close associates had been implicated.

■ **THE FBI:** Former acting director L. Patrick Gray III has admitted giving White House counselor John W. Dean III free access to Watergate files, even after he began to suspect Dean and others of manipulating the FBI and the CIA in the cover-up. Gray accepted and destroyed two files from burglar E. Howard Hunt's White House safe, given to him by John Ehrlichman and Dean. Gray also allowed Ehrlichman to cancel a meeting he had arranged with CIA director Richard Helms to compare notes on the cover-up—and he never scheduled another.

■ **THE CIA:** Two Watergate burglars, McCord and Hunt, were ex-CIA men who had served nineteen and 21 years with the agency. The CIA provided Hunt and Liddy with wigs, voice distorters, false papers and a special camera to use in the Ellsberg burglary. Former CIA director Richard Helms agreed to give the White House "plumbers" a psychiatric profile of Ellsberg assembled

from CIA files, but later refused further aid. Deputy CIA director Vernon A. Walters, under orders from Presidential aides H.R. Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Dean, helped to stall an FBI investigation of the financing of the Watergate mission. There was a concerted White House effort to pin the bugging on the CIA, but Helms never protested to Mr. Nixon or reported these activities to the CIA's Congressional watchdogs.

■ **DEPARTMENT OF STATE:** Under orders from the White House, Hunt was given access to 240 secret State Department cables from which he falsified documents linking John F. Kennedy to the assassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem.

■ **THE SEC:** After a New York grand jury reported that he had improperly handled an SEC complaint against indicted financier Robert Vesco, SEC chairman G. Bradford Cook resigned. His predecessor, William J. Casey, now an Under Secretary of State, was also under fire last week for SEC decisions involving Vesco and ITT.

ahead, the President didn't show it. He invited the top Republican leaders in Congress and party chairman George Bush up to Room 178 that very evening for a chat, lounging comfortably among the mementoes of his long career, sending his man Manolo Sanchez for Scotch and soda all around and light coffee for himself. "I have given my absolutely best recollection on what occurred," one guest remembered him saying. "... Some of the security leaks bothered me very much and I did what every President before me has done: I tried to do something about it. If some of the secrets had leaked, I couldn't have gone to China and our relations with the Soviet Union would have been disrupted... We had to find out where those leaks were." He seemed at ease and eager for their friendship. "I don't know what you here think of me," the President said. "I can only say that I hope you trust me and believe that I am an honest man."

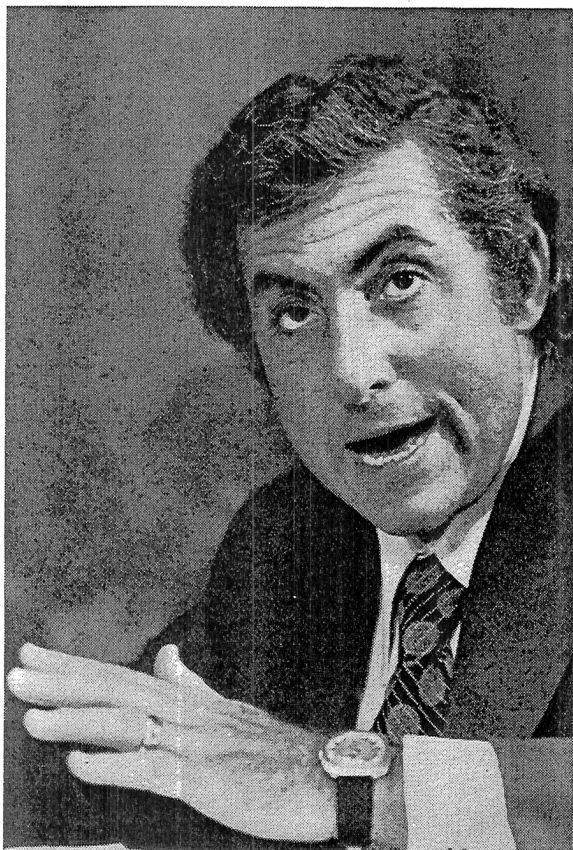
'Why Wait Till Now?'

The guests assured him that they did—"You're among friends, Mr. President," said one—but some of the private talk among senior Republicans was a good deal less upbeat. Some who approved of his new stand thought he had waited far too long. "Why didn't he say it last summer, or last fall, or last month when he went on television?" asked one 1972 campaign higher-up. "Why wait till now, when it's too late? If this one fails, there ain't no more." Others shared the surprisingly widespread feeling in the party that he was dissembling—and that he might well have something to hide. "He *still* hasn't come clean," said a Republican moderate in the Senate, and a gloomy House GOP leader echoed: "We haven't hit bottom yet."

The toboggan slide that most frightens the party, and the Nixonians, is the Ervin investigation. The grand jury inquiry into Watergate is inherently slower and tidier, and its progress has been further delayed while its management passes to Richardson and his new special prosecutor, Archibald Cox. Richardson was finally confirmed by the Senate last week, 82 to 3, with only the most invincibly suspicious Democrats dissenting; he moved swiftly to his new job with some sharp words about "a kind of sleaziness that has infected the ways in which things have been done"—and with an implied promise that he and Cox will try to do something about it.

Cox's first order of business was to quiet a rebellion among the three Federal prosecutors already on the case, who felt humiliated at having been su-

perseded and were threatening to quit. They had nearly completed their inquiry and were preparing to seek a comprehensive indictment within 60 to 90 days; the grand jury, NEWSWEEK learned, has in fact already reached a consensus on indicting Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Mitchell and Magruder and is in the process of moving on several more Administration and campaign officials. Magruder's agreement to turn state's evidence without immunity in hopes of a lighter sentence was one major break; the prosecution team, NEWSWEEK learned, has been trying to strike a similar deal with Dean. The old prosecutors are themselves under investigation by the Ervin committee for their earlier handling of the case; Cox held them



Lawrence McIntosh

over for the time being, but the timetable will have to be slowed while he catches up on the mountain of evidence.

The delay promises Mr. Nixon no respite from Watergate; it is likelier merely to prolong the agony. He served notice last week that he intends to make a fight for his future—"I will not abandon my responsibilities"—and hardly anybody on the Hill had much stomach for impeachment unless it is forced by overwhelming evidence. But neither were any but the stoutest Nixonians satisfied that the President had retrieved the government's reputation, or his own, with last week's white paper. "The office of the Presidency has been impeached already," said one Democratic senator—and the President's statement of his case was the plea of a wounded man, not so much for vindication as for survival.

The Hearings:

On loftier levels, the Watergate debate was conducted in terms of national security, international diplomacy and the historic question of how much a people's freedom may be violated in the name of protecting that freedom. But as Sen. Sam Ervin's special committee ground through its second stately week of hearings, the whole Watergate operation glowed with an ineradicably squalid sheen. While the seven senators looked on in mixed astonishment and repugnance, a squad of ex-burglars, ex-cops and ex-mouthpieces trooped before the committee microphones and network TV cameras to relate their humble workman's roles in the national disgrace and to affirm that they hardly made a move that wasn't inspired by thoughts of service to their friends, their country or their President.

In substance, the second round served



UPI

Ulasewicz: Don't take an army

Alch: A client's ingratitude

primarily to buttress the first—notably the allegation by James W. McCord Jr., convicted Waterbugger and the committee's first star witness, that he had been promised financial security and "executive clemency" by the White House if he took his punishment quietly. Some relatively minor charges—especially McCord's allegation that his first attorney, Gerald Alch, had in effect asked him to take a dive—were disputed seriously enough to cause rumblings about perjury from the senators. But on the largest question—whether Mr. Nixon had authorized or even known about the offer of clemency imputed to him—the committee ran up against a tantalizing wall of ambiguities and inferences.

As pure theater, the Ervin hearings were an unqualified smash. Senate investigators themselves had expected that



Wally McNamee—Newsweek

'God Bless America': The Nixons, with Heatherton, Damone, Berlin and Davis, serenade the POW's

Mr. Nixon States His Case

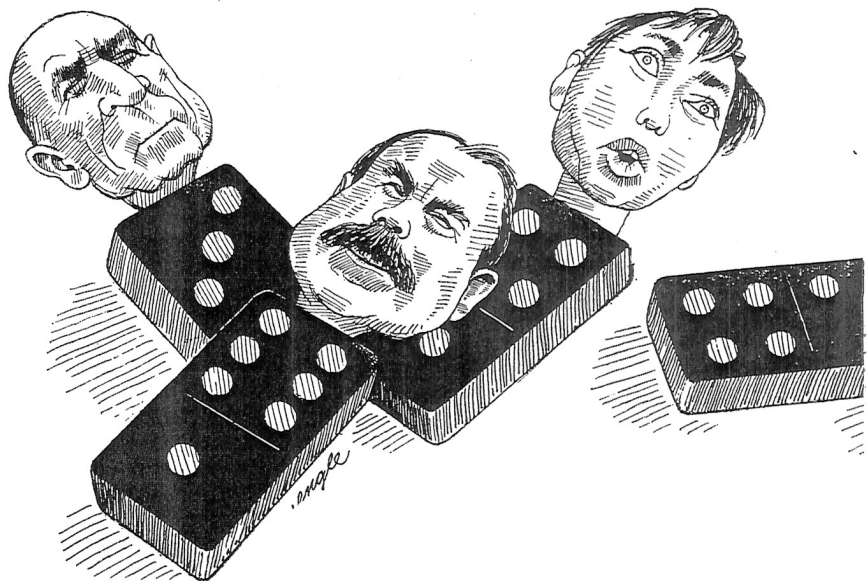
His back to the wall, Richard Nixon tried one more time last week to extricate himself and his ravaged Presidency from the Watergate mess. His instrument was an extraordinary 4,000-word white paper in which he confessed that his men had attempted a "wide-ranging" cover-up of the scandals and that he himself might inadvertently have helped set it in motion. The statement amounted almost to a plea for mercy at the court of public opinion—an appeal for his own exoneration of anything less noble than a concern for the nation's security. But it was a seriously flawed defense, too late, too lawyerly and too equivocal in critical passages to slow the runaway momentum of the case. Even the President's friends conceded privately that his brief for the defense had raised more issues than it answered—and so left him and his government more vulnerable than ever.

What was plain was that Mr. Nixon had to say something—that his Presidency was in danger of drowning in suspicion and accusation and that he had at least to buy himself some time. He began by admitting that he had indeed sanctioned a whole series of secret-police operations, some of which ran to the edges of the law and beyond; he conceded that he had tried to shelter them from inquiry on national-security grounds and might thus have prompted the broader blanket cover-up attempt. He continued to plead his own innocence in the Watergate scandals themselves. But his tone this time was reduced, even contrite: "To the extent that I may in

any way have contributed to the climate in which they took place, I did not intend to; to the extent that I failed to prevent them, I should have been more vigilant." He was plainly a man come near the last line of defense; he felt obliged to tell the nation that had re-elected him by a near-record landslide that he does not intend to resign.

But the case for the defense raised its own serious questions about Mr. Nixon's stewardship in office. It cast him as the master of his own private police, operating outside normal law-enforcement channels. It disclosed that he had once sanctioned a series of burglaries against various stateside intelligence

targets and had backed down only when J. Edgar Hoover protested. It pictured him as unwilling to stand up to Hoover at a point when the old man's crotchets were seriously disrupting legitimate intelligence operations. It justified his reining in the Watergate inquiry on grounds that he suspected the CIA might have been involved—and left open the question of why he didn't call the CIA to find out. It acknowledged that Hoover's short-run successor, L. Patrick Gray III, had warned him early on that the inquiry "might lead higher"—and never explained why he still suspected nothing for nine months thereafter. It sought in the end to absolve Mr. Nixon



of guilt by presenting him as ineffectual at managing the government and ignorant of what his people were doing. One of his own staff called it "a bomb"; one of his own leaders on the Hill wrote it off as "a plea of no contest to a charge of negligence."

The statement's very inadequacies were a measure of the gravity of the President's situation: his honor, and his future, rested on a rush of events no longer in his or anybody else's control. The Senate's Ervin committee hearings were a daily danger: one witness last week said the President's ousted counsel, John W. Dean III, had directed him to try to silence Waterbugger James McCord with a promise of executive clemency—and to say that the offer came from "way up at the top" of the White House. Jeb Stuart Magruder, the No. 2 man in the Nixon campaign and a prime candidate for indictment, agreed to turn state's evidence against his old comrades.

The Dean Papers

Past and present hierarchs of the CIA were making the rounds on the Hill suggesting that the President's men had tried—in the President's name—to involve them in the Watergate cover-up. A Senate committee fastened onto a set of Dean's purloined documents—among them the aborted secret-police plan approved by Mr. Nixon—and was preparing to release some of them. Two conspiracy and perjury suspects named John Mitchell and Maurice Stans were arraigned in a Federal courtroom in New York among the day's catch of common criminals; they pleaded not guilty.

And still the crisis of the Presidency sent its ripples spreading through the government and far beyond. Watergate shadowed Mr. Nixon's coming summit conferences with France's Georges Pompidou this week and with Russia's Leo-

nid Brezhnev next month. It so tarnished Henry Kissinger in the midst of his sensitive Paris talks with Hanoi's Le Duc Tho that the White House had to rush out a denial that he was quitting. It helped set off a series of dizzying gyrations on the stock market and a runaway rise in the price of gold. It turned Congress rebellious: the Senate overrode Mr. Nixon's veto of a bill requiring its confirmation of the head of the Office of Management and Budget, though the House upheld the President next day. And it drove Mr. Nixon's Gallup popularity rating down to 45 per cent—its lowest point since he took office.

What the President plainly hoped to do was to reverse the pell-mell slide, and his statement was only the beginning of a counteroffensive of sorts. He left the document to three unhappy staffers to read to a roomful of rancorous newsmen, but the word got out that he would follow with a press conference soon—perhaps this week. He paid court to the Republican leaders of Congress—looking surprisingly "relaxed and amiable," one of them thought—and late in the week he carried the attack to a star-spangled forum—a meeting of 600 Vietnam POW's and their wives. They got up cheering when he cried, "It is time to quit making national heroes out of those who steal secrets and publish them in newspapers . . . I'm going . . . to protect the national security of the United States of America so far as our secrets are concerned."

He had planned his strategy, and composed his statement, during a week spent largely alone with a few surviving senior counselors and a yellow legal pad. He submerged with the Ervin hearings off to a splashy beginning; with the Dean papers dangerously close to surfacing; with the chain of complicity running ever closer to the Oval Office. He weekendened in solitude at Camp David. He took three evening cruises on the Potomac aboard the yacht Sequoia with some of his inner circle. He spent more and more time in his hideaway nook, Room 178 of the Executive Office Building. He coun-

seled with his new staff lawyer, Leonard Garment, and some of his wordsmiths-in-residence—Ronald Ziegler, Patrick Buchanan and Ray Price. But it was largely a lonely chore—"How the hell," asked one adviser, "do you jog the memory of the President?"—and the finished manuscript was manifestly his own work.

The President's basic position on the Watergate bugging itself differed more in tone than in kind from his earlier pleas of innocence. The break-in at Democratic national headquarters came as "a complete surprise" to him, he said; nobody had told him about that, or the cover-up, or the attempt to buy the silence of the burglary gang with executive clemency and money. There was the awkward matter of Pat Gray's warning on July 6, 1972, that the trail might lead to some White House people; Mr. Nixon said he had answered by urging Gray to press ahead with his investigation.

'I Should Have Given More Heed'

In this elliptical account, nothing came up in the months that followed to further excite Mr. Nixon's suspicions. "I asked for, and received, repeated assurances," he said, "that Mr. Dean's own investigation . . . had cleared everyone then employed by the White House of involvement . . . With hindsight, it is apparent that I should have given more heed to the warning signals I received along the way . . . and less to the reassurances."

The President's single admission of complicity in the cover-up was that he had indeed tried to keep the Watergate investigators from poking into various national-security operations—the CIA's and his own. He traced his entry into the field to a "special program" of fewer than twenty wiretaps he authorized in 1969 to plug a series of news leaks he felt were endangering various "highly sensitive foreign policy initiatives."

The Nixon White House got deeper into the intelligence business, by the

