

## Washington

President Nixon, in his fourth major public response to the Watergate scandal, left unanswered many of the most publicized accusations and questions that have been raised about his own knowledge and conduct in the affair.

Mr. Nixon told his television audience that his written statement, distributed to the news media

**A  
News  
Analysis**

shortly before he went on the air, addressed the case as it relates "to my own conduct."

A comparison of the President's statement, as well as his speech, with testimony before the Senate Watergate committee shows, however, that Mr. Nixon passed over many of the most crucial points.

## GRAY

The President, for example, noted that on July 6, 1972, he had talked by telephone with acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray, but he

did not mention Gray's warning that "members of your staff are trying to mortally wound you" by using the FBI and the CIA.

The President also did not take up detailed charges by his former counsel, John W. Dean III, that Mr. Nixon was personally implicated in the Watergate coverup.

In his television address, Mr. Nixon said facts developed by the Senate committee "are complicated and the evidence conflicting." He told viewers that the prepared statement issued last night "addresses the charges ... as they relate to my own conduct" and "the efforts that I made to discover the facts about the matter."

In the written statement, however, the President acknowledged that the document "does not answer many of the questions and many of the questions and contentions raised during the Watergate hearings."

"It has not been my intention to attempt any such comprehensive and detailed

response," the statement said.

Thus, although the President and his legal advisers had worked intensively on his new Watergate response, controversy seems certain to continue on major points.

## MITCHELL

For one thing, Mr. Nixon did not attempt to explain how some of his closest advisers, including former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, could have taken part in a series of meetings at which bugging plans were discussed without the President getting wind of them.

Mr. Nixon said it was not until March 21, 1973, more than a year after the planning sessions began in Mitchell's Justice Department office, that he learned of them.

In his prepared statement and his television address, Mr. Nixon also passed over testimony by Dean and former White House aide H.R. Haldeman about a September 15, 1972, meeting in the Oval Office, at which Dean testified he told the President that the facts about Watergate had only been contained, not permanently suppressed.

Dean testified that the President praised him for his handling of the Watergate case.

Dean said he understood the praise to be for managing the coverup. Haldeman told the Senate committee the President was referring to the investigation he thought Dean had been making.

Mr. Nixon's new statements shed no light on this difference in interpretation of his own words.

## INTEREST

In his prepared statement, Mr. Nixon said, "my interest in Watergate rose in February and March as the senate committee was organized and the hearings were held on the Gray nomination" — the latter a reference to the President's nomination of Gray as FBI director.

Mr. Nixon did not address himself to Senate committee testimony by several of his top aides that it was during the February period that the aides met at La Costa, Cal-

ifornia to discuss ways of influencing and possibly blunting the committee's investigation.

Nor did the President comment on what his reaction had been when Gray testified, during the confirmation hearings late in March, that Dean had "probably" lied to FBI agents investigating White House ties to Watergate.

Gray told the Watergate committee that he received a "buck up" telephone call the next day in which the President assured him of a continued place in the administration.

## MEETINGS

Some of the most noticeable omissions from both Mr. Nixon's written statement and his televised speech centered on a series of meetings he had with Dean at the White House during March. These meetings were secretly recorded and Haldeman testified about one of them after reviewing a recording of the conversation.

At one of these meetings, Haldeman and Dean agreed, the President led a lengthy discussion about attempts by Watergate defendants to blackmail the White House and what the ultimate cost might be.

The two witnesses agreed that Mr. Nixon said raising as much as \$1 million would be "no problem," though Haldeman said the President asserted "it would be wrong" to make the payoffs.

Haldeman said the tapes showed Mr. Nixon asked Dean detailed questions about how payments could be handled and whether Dean recommended they be made. Haldeman interpreted this as an effort by the President to draw Dean out.

## INFORMATION

In the March 21 meeting with Dean, Mr. Nixon said, he "was given new information" and "was told then for the first time" about the role of higher-ups in planning the Watergate break-in, the raising of money for the seven defendants, Hunt's blackmail effort, and about a conversation by "a member of my staff" with one defendant on the subject of executive clemency.

Mr. Nixon's remarks last night portrayed this discussion as having been in general terms, based "in part

on supposition" and "largely unsupported" by evidence.

Dean's Senate committee testimony, largely confirmed by Haldeman's recollections and his review of the tapes, indicated that Dean laid out for the President the potential vulnerability of his top aides by name.

Dean also had warned that "there is a cancer growing on the presidency," he and Haldeman agreed.

## ARRANGED

In his statement, Mr. Nixon said that after hearing Dean on March 21 he immediately "arranged to meet the following day with Messrs. Ehrlichman, Haldeman, Dean, and Mitchell to discuss the appropriate method to get the facts out."

All four participants in the March 22 meeting with the president testified before the Senate committee. They agreed they were not confronted by the president with what Dean had told him the day before about their involvement.

They testified that the meeting centered on potential problems posed by the impending committee hearings.

The President's statement discussed a meeting April 15 with Justice Department officials about new evidence they had obtained implicating White House aides in Watergate, but it did not mention a meeting Mr. Nixon had with Dean the same day.

According to Dean's testimony, the President told him he (the President) had been "joking" in his remarks about raising \$1 million for the Watergate burglars.

Dean said the President had also admitted it had been "foolish" for him (Mr. Nixon) to discuss executive clemency with White House aide Charles W. Colson.

Mr. Nixon acknowledged last night that he had known about White House agents' burglary of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist at the time John Ehrlichman talked to U.S. District Judge Matt Byrne, then presiding over Ellsberg's Pentagon Papers trial.

When the break-in was later revealed to Byrne, he ended the prosecution.

Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst, who learned of the break-in after Mr. Nixon did, persuaded the President that Byrne should be informed, the statement last night said.