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Nixon Speech Raises Question

By John Hanrahan
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President Nixon's Wednesday night speech shed little new light on the Watergate affair, but did raise at least one major question: Why did Mr. Nixon continue to rely on his counsel, John W. Dean III, as his main source of information after March 21, when Dean detailed the extent of the scandal?

It was on March 21, Mr. Nixon said in his speech to the nation, that Dean gave him "new information... that led me to conclude that the reports I had been getting for over nine months were not true."

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As his next step after Dean's disclosures, Mr. Nixon said in his speech,

"At first, I entrusted the task of getting me the facts to Mr. Dean. When, after spending a week at Camp David he failed to produce the written report I had asked for, I turned to White House aide John Ehrlichman and the Attorney General—while also making independent inquiries of my own."

Mr. Nixon did not explain why he had not lost faith in Dean by "his" point especially since he said the following were among the matters about which he heard from Dean for the first time on March 21:

See COMPANION, Col. 1

COMPARE From A1

... That the planning of the Watergate break-in went beyond those who had been tried and convicted, and that at least one, and possibly more, persons, at

the re-election committee were involved."

That funds had been raised for payments to the defendants, with the knowledge and approval of persons both on the White House staff and at the election committee, he also said.

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director, at his Senate confirmation hearing.

Mr. Nixon did not address himself to Gray's allegation in his Wednesday speech, further adding to the question of why he would continue to rely on Dean despite all the warning signs.

Mr. Nixon's statement and speech of Wednesday also appear to conflict with the President's own earlier speech on April 30, in which he said he made in the aftermath of Dean's March 21 disclosure.

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Petersen said Mr. Nixon also asked him on April 15 if Dean should be fired and Petersen said he replied no, because Dean was cooperating with the investigation (Petersen said he told Mr. Nixon later in April that Dean was no longer cooperating.)

Mr. Nixon did not explain in his Wednesday night speech why, after receiving Petersen's advice on April 15, he asked for Dean's resignation the next day, according to Dean's testimony.

The President also did not explain why, in light of Petersen's advice, he called Haldeman and Ehrlichman "two of the finest public servants I have ever known" when he announced their resignations in his April 30 speech.

The Wednesday night speech contained no words of praise for Haldeman and Ehrlichman.

The President had now made three major statements on the Watergate affair this year. The first was his April 30 speech in which he avoided specifics while disclaiming any personal involvement or knowledge in the Watergate bugging and subsequent cover up.

The next was his more detailed May 22 statement. Apparently anticipating Dean's testimony before the Senate committee, Mr. Nixon specifically denied trying to involve the CIA in the Watergate affair as a means of covering up the scandal under the guise of national security.

His third major statement, delivered Wednesday night, was widely expected to be more detailed than ei-

their testimony, contacted

with Mr. Nixon's April 30 speech on the point of when they were personally contacted by the President after March 21. Gray said he was first contacted, Kleindienst and Petersen said they were not contacted by Mr. Nixon until April.

Kleindienst, the former General, immediately denied the Watergate probe. Petersen, however, said he

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ber of his two previous statements, but actually proved to be more like the April 30th speech in its lack of specifics.

As in his May 22 statement, the President did address himself Wednesday night to a call he made to acting FBI Director Gray on July 6, 1972. In that call, according to Gray's testimony, Gray told Mr. Nixon that some of the President's aides were trying to "mortally wound" the President by using the FBI and CIA to "confuse" the investigation of the Watergate break-in.

Mr. Nixon, in his Wednesday statement, said that Gray told him in the July 6 conversation that Gray had determined from his meeting with Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters, deputy CIA director, that there was no CIA involvement in the Watergate affair.

"I concluded by instructing him to press forward vigorously with his own investigation," Mr. Nixon said.

There was nothing in either the April 30th address or Wednesday's speech about Gray's purported

warning that the President might "become mortally wounded" by the Watergate affair. In his May 22 statement, Mr. Nixon said that Gray, in the July 6 conversation, suggested that the matter of Watergate might lead higher. I told him to press ahead with the investigation."

In his May 22 statement, the President did not state specifically when he first learned of the break-in at the office of Dr. Lewis Fielding, the psychiatrist for Pentagon Papers defendant Daniel Ellsberg, in September, 1971.

However, he did say in that statement that Kleindienst, on April 25 of this year "informed me that... the government had clear evidence... that Watergate conspirator F. Howard Hunt Jr. had been involved in the break-in at Fielding's office."

As in the May 22 speech, Mr. Nixon said he had not learned of the Fielding break-in until after March 21 of this year. In his Wednesday speech, Mr. Nixon said his earlier statement was not precisely accurate and that he first learned of

the Fielding break-in on March 21. This would mean that Mr. Nixon was aware of the Fielding break-in at least a week before he made his Wednesday speech.

Mr. Nixon said he had two meetings with Hyatt in early April. At the first meeting, acting under Mr. Nixon's instruction, Ehrlichman said he sounded out Hyatt on the possibility of becoming FBI director.

Mr. Nixon said he presided over a meeting on April 25, 1972, at which he first learned of the break-in at Fielding's office. He said he was not involved in the break-in at Fielding's office.

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Mr. Nixon's Wednesday speech offered a specific point of comparison with his earlier Watergate statements.

Left unanswered were numerous questions concerning Mr. Nixon's conversation with Dean Haideman on March 13, 1972, concerning the contents of the memo that he received from Ehrlichman.

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