

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

ACCOMPANYING STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Recent news accounts growing out of testimony in the Watergate investigations have given grossly misleading impressions of many of the facts, as they relate both to my own role and to certain unrelated activities involving national security.

Already, on the basis of second and third-hand hearsay testimony by persons either convicted or themselves under investigation in the case, I have found myself accused of involvement in activities I never heard of until I read about them in news accounts.

These impressions could also lead to a serious misunderstanding of those national security activities which, though totally unrelated to Watergate, have become entangled in the case. They could lead to further compromise of sensitive national security information.

I will not abandon my responsibilities. I will continue to do the job I was elected to do.

In the accompanying statement, I have set forth the facts as I know them as they relate to my own role.

With regard to the specific allegations that have been made, I can and do state categorically:

- 1) I had no prior knowledge of the Watergate operation.
- 2) I took no part in, nor was I aware of, any subsequent efforts that may have been made to cover up Watergate.
- 3) At no time did I authorize any offer of Executive clemency for the Watergate defendants, nor did I know of any such offer.
- 4) I did not know, until the time of my own investigation, of any effort to provide the Watergate defendants with funds.
- 5) At no time did I attempt, or did I authorize others to attempt, to implicate the CIA in the Watergate matter.
- 6) It was not until the time of my own investigation that I learned of the break-in at the office of Mr. Ellsberg's psychiatrist, and I specifically authorized the furnishing of this information to Judge Byrne.
- 7) I neither authorized nor encouraged subordinates to engage in illegal or improper campaign tactics.

In the accompanying statement, I have sought to provide the background that may place recent allegations in perspective. I have specifically stated that Executive privilege will not be invoked as to any testimony concerning possible criminal conduct or discussions of possible criminal conduct, in the matters under investigation. I want the public to learn the truth about Watergate, and those guilty of any illegal actions brought to justice.

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