

Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

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The Return of Bryce Harlow

Although President Nixon has made no specific request yet that he return to full-time duty in the White House, the wise and experienced Bryce Harlow has been secretly giving Mr. Nixon and the White House staff invaluable help there since the Watergate scandal broke open, while keeping his job as a Washington lobbyist.

That worries friends of Harlow, former high aide to Presidents Eisenhower and Nixon and now Washington vice president of Proctor and Gamble. If White House demands on his time continue, he will either have to take a leave of absence from the nation's largest soap company or say no.

With Watergate scandals flooding the White House, Harlow will not risk involving Mr. Nixon in new criticism that the nation's business is being handled by a highly paid lobbyist operating out of the White House.

Harlow himself, in a closed-door session with Southern Republican state chairmen May 16, pointed up a similar conflict-of-interest involving Gen. Alexander Haig Jr., the President's "interim" chief of staff and one of the few aides in whom Mr. Nixon now reposes total trust.

Harlow told the Southern Republicans that Haig either would have to give up his role as the President's chief aide, with highly sensitive duties going far beyond the usual traffic-cop function of a staff aide, or "leave the Army."

The reason: No military officer, Harlow said, should be permitted (or compelled, as in Haig's case) to fill an essentially political job at the highest civilian level of the government.

Harlow's own predicament as outside adviser on continuous call from the White House is similar, and he knows it. He left Mr. Nixon's White House as Cabinet-level head of the congressional lobbyist staff in December, 1970, to make money, after 23 years in the government, 10 of them in the White House. The fact that the President is now calling him back for "consultation" shows how thin the White House staff really is, with Haig (full-time) and John B. Connally (part-time) the only replacements for the Haldeman-Ehrlichman-Dean top level pre-Watergate staff.

Suspicious by conservative Republicans that Vice President Spiro Agnew is being totally programmed by the White House to his own political detriment were fed last week when he referred to the Watergate scandal as a "manufactured" issue.

In a little-noticed speech last Monday to the Republican Bull Elephant Club (composed of top congressional aides), Agnew also called Watergate "the alleged and insinuated wrongdoing" that Republicans at large should avoid "protesting" too much.

Conservatives hoping to run Agnew

for President in 1976 are horrified. They think the only correct and safe posture for Agnew now is to say nothing.

Sen. Stuart Symington of Missouri, seeking to save the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) from the Watergate wreckage, believes it has been assaulted not only from President Nixon's erstwhile aides but from the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Symington, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee as well as acting chairman of the Armed Services Committee, boiled with anger over recent published reports that former CIA Director Richard Helms deceived the Senate about the agency's Watergate involvement during his confirmation hearings to become ambassador to Iran early this year. A furious Symington told his colleagues that the charge was leaked by Foreign Relations Committee staffers, out to cut down both Helms and the CIA.

However, Helms received a unanimous clean bill of health from Symington and other Armed Services Committee members after their investigation into possible Watergate links. Any attempt to force Helms out of Teheran will be vigorously opposed by an influential bipartisan bloc of senators.

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