

COLSON CITES CALL ON C.I.A. 'LIAISON'

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Tells Senate Unit He Asked
Ehrlichman to Help Hunt
Get Agency's Aid
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WASHINGTON, June 19—

Charles W. Colson, a former White House aide, told a Senate panel today that he had personally asked John D. Ehrlichman to help E. Howard Hunt Jr. establish "liaison with the C.I.A." in the summer of 1971.

Mr. Colson's testimony would seem to refute the recent denial by Mr. Ehrlichman, the former top Nixon domestic aide, that he had made any approach to the Central Intelligence Agency to ask that Hunt be given whatever assistance he might need that summer.

But it supported testimony made recently by Gen. Robert E. Cushman Jr., commandant of the United States Marine Corps.

Hunt had been employed that summer by the White House as a member of a special team — dubbed "the plumbers"—created to track down leaks of sensitive national security information, including the Pentagon papers detailing American involvement in Southeast Asia.

Using a wig and various other equipment supplied to him by the C.I.A., Hunt was subsequently involved in burglarizing the California office of the former psychiatrist to Dr. Daniel Ellsberg, the principal defendant in the Pentagon papers trial.

Hunt was also later convicted of conspiracy in the break-in at Democratic national headquarters in the Watergate complex on June 17, 1972.

Mystery Deepening

Mr. Colson's testimony today appeared to deepen the mystery of White House efforts to involve the C.I.A. in domestic activities, both before and after the Watergate affair.

During a two-hour appearance before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Intelligence Operations, Mr. Colson testified:

"On the 7th or possibly the 8th of July [which would have been by phone] I told Mr. Ehrlichman that Mr. Hunt wanted to establish liaison with the C.I.A. as well as with other Government agencies.

"The need for contact with the C.I.A. was immediate in

that one of Mr. Hunt's first assignments was to interview a Lieut. Col. Lucien Conein, who had been a principal C.I.A. operative during the period of the Diem coup (in South Vietnam)."

Previous testimony by C.I.A. officials had made no mention of Hunt's interest in Colonel Conein during his initial efforts to obtain assistance from the intelligence agency.

General Cushman, at that time deputy director of the agency, told several Congressional committees in recent weeks that Mr. Ehrlichman had telephoned him on July 7, 1971, to ask that Hunt be given some assistance, at that time unspecified.

Cushman Testimony

General Cushman also testified that Hunt had appeared at the C.I.A. headquarters on July 22 of that year to ask for "technical services" to enable him to conduct "a very sensitive one-time interview that the White House wanted him to hold."

General Cushman testified that he then supplied Hunt with a wig, a small camera, a device to alter the voice, and false identification papers. He said, however, he had been unaware that the equipment would be used in a burglary.

Asked today if Hunt had also sought help in locating Colonel Conein—as suggested in the Colson testimony—General Cushman replied, "I have no further comment."

Colonel Conein, now a consultant in the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, said later today that Hunt talked to him "some time that summer," seeking information about Dr. Ellsberg and "asking what I might know about the Pentagon papers case."

Colonel Conein said that he told Hunt he had had no contact with Dr. Ellsberg since 1967 and knew nothing about the Pentagon papers.

Colonel Conein was the C.I.A.'s liaison with the group of Vietnamese generals who overthrew the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem, the President of South Vietnam, in 1963. Mr. Diem was killed in the coup. Colonel Conein was also part of a team, along with Dr. Ellsberg, that served as advisers to Henry Cabot Lodge when he was named Ambassador to South Vietnam.

Public Disclosure

Mr. Colson testified in closed session today, but his comments about asking Mr. Ehrlichman to help establish intelligence agency liaison for Hunt were made public later by Senator John L. McClellan, chairman of the subcommittee investigating C.I.A. involvement in the Watergate affair.

Senator McClellan noted what he termed the discrepancies between the Colson and Ehrlichman testimony over White House efforts to involve the intelligence agency.