

John Dean—Bright, Sharp,

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If John Dean has anything to do with President Nixon's response to the Senate Judiciary Committee's invitation to testify—and he will—the reply will be polite as well as negative.

That is the way John Wesley Dean III has conducted himself during his 8-year rise as a lawyer for politicians: fastidiously correct in manner, almost totally uninformative to outsiders, and completely loyal to his employer.

These qualities, along with a deep admiration for President Nixon and a reputation as a bright, sharp and pragmatic operator, have combined to bring Dean increased White House influence and, especially in recent months, fuller meaning to his title of counsel to the President.

The president's growing reliance on the 34-year-old

aide stems partly from Dean's expertise in precisely the areas of new friction between the executive branch and Congress. Dean is versed in such matters as the impoundment of funds, the controversy over pocket vetoes and the administration's interpretation of the doctrine of executive privilege.

Several times recently Dean has been deeply involved in the pleading of executive privilege for others, notably Peter M. Flanigan last year when Flanigan was the White House link to the business community. Now the Judiciary Committee wants to talk to Dean himself, and the subject is the Watergate case and Dean's role in the FBI's controversial investigation.

Friends and former associates who agree about Dean's intensity and charm are divided over whether he is capable of some of the gravest deeds suggested dur-

ing the grilling of FBI director-designate L. Patrick Gray III, whose confirmation could be delayed for months if Dean maintains his refusal to testify.

Sen. John Tunney (D-Calif.), whose motion to invite Dean was approved by the committee yesterday, sums it up by saying Dean was "omnipresent" whenever the FBI's investigation got close to highly placed political figures.

Under a presidential directive to probe for possible involvement of current White House employees, Dean sat in on all FBI interviews with the presidential staff. Although he clearly was protecting the president's interest, one defendant in the Watergate eavesdropping conspiracy, E. Howard Hunt, apparently sought through an intermediary to obtain Dean's personal legal advice.

Of all the suggestions of dark dealing, perhaps the

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most serious has to do with the question whether all the contents of Hunt's executive office building safe were turned over by Dean to the FBI. Then there are suggestions that Dean, who received voluminous raw FBI data, compromised the information so that it fell into hands of investigative targets.

Last year when Dean's former boss, Richard G. Kleindienst, was up for confirmation as attorney general, it was Dean who received the FBI's borrowed copy of a controversial memo by Dita Beard of International Telephone & Telegraph Corp., a memo that wound up in ITT hands in an attempt to discredit its authenticity.

Dean has defenders on Capitol Hill and in the Justice Department who contend that the charges are unproved and that whatever charges stick to Dean can be

explained as mistaken in judgment.

Dean was a scholar-athlete at Staunton Military Academy, in Virginia, where he roomed with Rep. Barry M. Goldwater Jr. (R-Calif.). He then attended Colgate University and was graduated from the College of Wooster in Ohio in 1961. After a year at American University's graduate school of government and public administration, he entered Georgetown Law Center and graduated in 1965 with academic honors.

His political career began as counsel to the Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee. From 1967 to 1969 he was associate director of the congressional commission to revise the federal criminal laws.

Both in the House and with the commission, Dean was part of a handful of young Republican lawyers who foresaw the need to develop a stronger crime plat-

form for the 1968 elections.

He was one of a four-member cadre that met regularly in the Judiciary Committee library as a self-styled "bunch of hotshots" who knew all the answers" about criminal law and whose discussions bore fruit in major portions of the Nixon "tough on crime" campaign package.

Dean has risen higher politically than the other three. The others are Donald H. Santarelli, associate deputy attorney general; Richard Velde, one of the three heads of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, and Brian Gettings, United States Attorney in Alexandria.

Dean joined the Justice Department in 1969 as associate deputy attorney general with special responsibility for the administration's crime legislation. He soon moved to the White House, where he has held the title of counsel since July, 1970.