

Dean Says President Didn't Order Inquiry On Watergate

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WASHINGTON (AP) — Former White House counsel John W. Dean III was quoted Sunday as saying President Nixon never asked him for an investigative report on the Watergate case even though Nixon has told the American people otherwise.

Another news report said the President did ask Dean to sign a virtual confession that he alone on the White House staff concealed facts in the case.

In a Newsweek Magazine interview, Dean said he was "flabbergasted" last Aug. 29 when the President revealed that an investigative report he said was prepared by Dean said no current White House employees were involved in the case.

"Here was the President of

the United States reassuring the American people on the basis of a report that didn't exist," Newsweek quoted Dean as saying.

In a similar story Time Magazine quoted an associate of Dean as saying the former aide conducted no Watergate investigation for the President. Time said Dean was called into Nixon's office last March and asked to sign two papers, one his resignation and the other a virtual confession that he alone

on the White House staff had concealed facts in the case.

Dean, the magazine said, asked Nixon what would happen to White House aides H.R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, both now resigned.

"They have given verbal assurance that they were not part of a coverup," Nixon replied according to Dean's account in Time.

Time reported also that Martha Mitchell has suffered a nervous breakdown and voluntarily

entered a medical institution for treatment on May 7.

The report, which could not immediately be confirmed, said Mrs. Mitchell put herself under a doctor's care and entered a hospital May 7, two days after she told a reporter in a late-night telephone call she believed the President should resign.

Time said the wife of former U.S. Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell was unable to sleep, distraught, and unhappy.

Meanwhile, the ranking Republican on the Senate Watergate investigating committee said the President faces possible impeachment if facts clearly prove he was involved in Watergate.

Sen. Howard Baker, R-Tenn., declined to state where he believes the facts eventually will fall.

But he said he has no reason at present to believe Nixon was not telling the truth when he said he had no participation or knowledge of either the Watergate bugging or its alleged coverup.

The Tennessee Republican declined to state flatly, however, that the President is not a subject of investigation by the Senate committee which Thursday opens its first public hearings into the conduct of the 1972 election.

Baker said he would not exclude the possibility the President may be offered an opportunity by the committee to "state his side of the case."

At the same time, he said,

staff investigators are not ignoring the possibility of involvement by Democratic candidates in illegal or unethical political acts last year.

And he posed the possibility that the scope of the Senate investigation may be broadened far beyond its present mandate to include the elections of 1968, 1964 and 1960.

The possibility of impeachment was on the minds of other political figures also, most of whom said they did not believe it even remotely probable.

"There are mutterings about impeachment in the House," said Rep. John B. Anderson, R-Ill., chairman of the House Republican conference. "But I don't think it has reached serious proportions."

Sen. William Brock, R-Tenn.,

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joined Anderson in a call for fundamental reform of election laws.

And Rep. Thomas Foley, D-Wash., said he believes talk of impeachment is both "presumptive and dangerous" and said it is his "absolute judgment" Nixon will neither resign nor be impeached.

Baker was interviewed on the NBC television program, "Meet the Press." Brock and Anderson were questioned on the CBS television news program, "Face the Nation."

Baker called the issue of possible impeachment "the most severe form of iffy questions."