

Probers' Staff Quizzes

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By Lawrence R. Meyer
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Former White House counsel John W. Dean III, who has become a pivotal figure in the Watergate scandal, is expected to testify today under oath in a closed-door session with the staff of the Senate select Watergate committee.

The committee also has scheduled an executive session for Monday to discuss "internal matters," according to Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), committee chairman. Sources close to the committee said that the committee may question Dean during that session prior to his public testimony on Tuesday.

In addition, the sources said, the committee may also review nine top secret documents it has obtained indirectly from Dean to determine which cannot be made public because of jeopardizing national security.

Former White House chief of staff H. R. (Bob) Haldeman was interviewed for more than four hours by the

committee's staff Thursday night, according to reliable

Former deputy Nixon campaign manager Jeb Stuart Magruder told the committee Thursday that he had informed Haldeman before he (Magruder) testified in the Watergate trial that he was going to commit perjury. Magruder also told the committee that Haldeman's aide, Gordon Strachan, was sent copies of all memos and budget dealing with the Watergate bugging.

Magruder said he "assumed" that Haldeman knew about the bugging but that Haldeman told him during their January meeting that he had not known the facts about the bugging or the cover-up before Magruder told him.

Haldeman, in an interview with CBS News outside his house yesterday, said he is looking forward to his appearance before the Senate committee.

"I am fully confident," Haldeman said, "that when all truth is known in the proper forum and in its totality that there will be no question as to my position

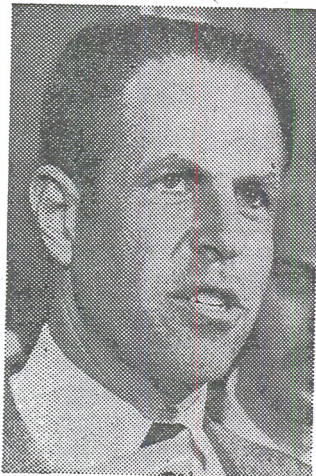
in this matter and my noninvolvement in any way, shape or form in any improper or illegal acts whether they be acts of commitment, acts of cover-up or anything else that might be considered.

"I was not involved in the planning or the execution of the Watergate as I have consistently said. I was not involved in any cover-up of the Watergate in any way, as I have consistently said, and that will become clearly known and understood as the truth comes out," Haldeman said.

The committee staff also had expected yesterday to interview former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, accused Thursday by Magruder of participating in the planning of and approving the Watergate operation and subsequently joining in the cover-up. Plato Cacheris, a lawyer for Mitchell, said yesterday that Mitchell will make "no public pronouncement at this point" concerning Magruder's testimony.

Mitchell did not appear for questioning by the committee staff. William G. Hundley, also a lawyer for

Dean Today in Private



H. R. (Bob) Haldeman (left) and John W. Dean III differ over how much the former knew of cover-up.

Mitchell, said that the staff had agreed not to interview his client after Hundley asked that Mitchell be excused.

Hundley said he is trying to persuade the committee not to call Mitchell to testify since Mitchell has been notified by the Watergate prosecutors "that he's definitely a target (of their

investigation) in those areas that the committee wants to get into."

If the committee declines Hundley's request and calls Mitchell, "He will not invoke the Fifth Amendment," Hundley said. "If our objections are overruled, he'll testify."

In the meantime, Hundley said, he is trying to make a

record of his objections to Mitchell's testifying before the committee. Such a record would be useful in subsequent court proceedings, laying the groundwork possibly for an argument that Mitchell's right to a fair trial had been prejudiced.

In a news conference in Chicago yesterday, Ervin said that "thus far I see no necessity to call the President" to testify before the committee. Ervin declined, however, to answer speculative questions about issuing a subpoena to Mr. Nixon.

In a related matter, the committee Thursday issued subpoenas for the campaign finance records of five potential 1972 Democratic presidential candidates—Sens. George S. McGovern (S.D.), Edmund S. Muskie (Maine), Hubert H. Humphrey (Minn.) and Henry M. Jackson (Wash.) and Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace.

Ervin signed the subpoenas after Sen. Howard H. Baker Jr. (R-Tenn.) asked him to call for the records to see what the "custom and

usage" of the Democratic candidates were with respect to distributing large contributions among their campaign committees to avoid gift tax problems for the contributors.

A source close to the committee said that the committee also will "probably" seek the campaign finance records of Sen. Vance Hartke (D-Ind.) and Rep. Wilbur Mills (D-Ark.) both of whom ran short-lived campaigns for the Democratic nomination.

Dean, who was fired as White House counsel by President Nixon on April 30, has told Senate and federal investigators that he met with Mr. Nixon at least 35 times between January and April of this year to discuss aspects of the cover-up, according to reliable sources.

In addition, Dean has told the investigators that Haldeman and special assistant to the President John D. Ehrlichman attended some of the meetings.

On May 4, Dean asked Chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica to take pos-

session of nine top secret White House documents that Dean had placed in a safe deposit box. Sirica accepted the documents, later giving a copy to the Water-gate safe deposit box. Sirica ac-Senate committee.

The documents, among other things, contain memorandums discussing a domestic intelligence plan that included electronic surveillance and burglary. President Nixon approved the plan in July 1970 after being warned by advisers that parts of it were "clearly illegal." Five days after approving the plan, Mr. Nixon said in a May 22 statement, he rescinded approval after FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover objected to the plan.

Ervin said on May 31 that the so-called "Dean documents" would be "a great shock to the American people if they were released." Ervin said the papers reflected an "effort or a plan to set up an operation to spy on the American people or at least on those who didn't agree with the administration."