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'Cover-up' Conflicts Unsettled

By Lawrence Meyer

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Senate select Watergate committee was unable yesterday to resolve conflicting accounts from several witnesses about incidents in which former Nixon campaign manager Clark MacGregor took part after hearing three hours of testimony from MacGregor.

The bulk of what MacGregor had to say was covered in a sworn deposition he gave last summer as part of a suit by officials of the Democratic National Committee against the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

MacGregor, now a vice president of the United Aircraft Corp., served as director of the re-election committee from July 1, 1972, until immediately after the November, 1972, election.

As he testified in his deposition, MacGregor told the committee yesterday that he had been misled and kept in the dark about important facts concerning the involvement of re-election committee personnel in the Watergate affair. MacGregor said he had no knowledge that re-election committee funds were used to buy the silence of the seven Watergate defendants, that strategy sessions to foster a cover-up were being held by key White House and re-election committee officials throughout the summer and fall or that the plans for the break-in at the Democratic National Committee's Watergate headquarters had been hatched with the participation of deputy Nixon campaign manager Jeb Stuart Magruder.

MacGregor said that he had dealt in trust, "because you assume that people are honest and straightforward and candid with you when you are dealing with them, and so I assumed. Nineteen seventy-three has been a very sad year for me because I find that trust was misplaced."

MacGregor exempted President Nixon from his statement of disillusion say-

ing that he wanted to make it "crystal clear" that Mr. Nixon's conduct with him "has been just the reverse. (It has) been trustworthy . . . absolutely candid, straightforward and fair and I have never found anything that the President of the United States said was so that wasn't so."

Among the several conflicts that MacGregor was questioned about was a phone conversation between him and acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray on July 6, 1972.

Gray testified that he called MacGregor in California at 10:51 a.m. (7:51 California time) to tell him that people around Mr. Nixon "were wounding the President." Gray said he asked MacGregor to tell that to President Nixon and that 37 minutes later Mr. Nixon called Gray. During that conversation Gray testified that he told Mr. Nixon that his aides were trying to "wound" him, but that Mr. Nixon did not question him about what he meant.

MacGregor said he received the phone call from Gray shortly before 11 p.m. California time on July 5 which would have been shortly before 2 a.m. Washington time. MacGregor said that Gray did not ask him to tell Mr. Nixon of what Gray described as his "great concern."

MacGregor also disagreed with the testimony of former presidential domestic adviser John D. Ehrlichman to the House Armed Forces Committee that the call from Mr. Nixon to Gray was prompted "by MacGregor's conveying a request from Gray to the President." MacGregor said Ehrlichman's testimony was hearsay.

In addition, MacGregor said that three weeks ago, on Oct. 11, while going through a reception line at the White House, President Nixon said to him, "Clark, you did not mention the Pat Gray matter to me on July 6." Under questioning by Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (R-Conn.), MacGregor was unable to explain what prompted Mr. Nixon to make that remark. MacGregor said that Mr. Nixon did not elaborate on the statement.

MacGregor also disputed testimony by former Assistant Attorney General and Nixon campaign aide Robert C. Mardian that Mardian tried to brief MacGregor about the facts of the Watergate affair at the Republican Convention in Miami in August 1972 but MacGregor refused.