

# Dean Thinks Burger Made Tapes Pledge

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LOS ANGELES, Jan. 15—John W. Dean III said today he fully trusts the accuracy of Charles W. Colson's statement to him that former President Nixon had received assurances the Supreme Court would protect the secrecy of the White House tapes.

His reaffirmation of an earlier comment to a television interviewer came at a news conference that he and his wife, Maureen, held on the patio of their \$130,000 Trousdale Estates home in the hills overlooking Los Angeles.

It was the first formal meeting with the press for the key Watergate figure since U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica released him last week from a federal prison at Ft. Holabird, Md., where he had been serving a one- to four-year term.

Dean, who seemed thinner than usual, said he "had no reason to doubt" what he said Colson, former White House special counsel told him in prison.

Colson said according to Dean, that Nixon "had talked with (Supreme Court Chief Justice (Warren) Burger shortly after this suit to block release of the tapes) was filed . . . and it gave him confidence that he indeed was going to win the lawsuit."

Dean said he learned this in a series of conversations with Colson, who is still serving time at Holabird following a

guilty plea on a Watergate related charge.

Dean's remarks, originally made Tuesday during an NBC interview, were denied by a Supreme Court spokesman, according to NBC. The spokesman reportedly said Burger denied speaking at all to Nixon in 1973 or 1974. The network said a Nixon spokesman also denied the alleged contact.

The Supreme Court ultimately ordered the tapes turned over to the District Court, and the tapes formed the basis not only for Mr. Nixon's resignation but also the criminal conviction of three of his closest aides, John N. Mitchell, H. R. Bob Haldeman, and John D. Ehrlichman, for participating in the Watergate cover-up.

Dean, a former White House counsel who was among the first of Nixon insiders to blow the whistle on the cover-up, said today that Colson has also been talking to Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (R-Conn), a member of the Senate Watergate committee, about domestic involvement of the CIA.

"The CIA had been lurking around the fringes of Watergate," said Dean, "and Colson had actually read the CIA's central file on the matter, and found it quite revealing."

Dean said he had arranged for Weicker and Colson to get together in recent weeks although Weicker at first had strong doubts about Colson's credibility. "Weicker has since told me he is deeply impressed with Colson's knowl-

edge and his ability to substantiate his revelations," Dean commented.

A spokesman for Weicker confirmed that the senator had talked with Colson in recent weeks about the CIA and other matters and is looking into the information given him by Colson. But the spokesman declined to disclose the nature of the information or whether Weicker considered it significant.

Dean also said he is "of the school" that believes Nixon "has suffered a great deal." He added: "I never wanted to see the man convicted of an offense."

In time, people with a broader historical perspective will credit the achievements of a man who was touched with "a stroke of greatness," Dean said.

"I would like very much to talk to the former President . . . Whether he wants to see me is another question," he added.

Seated in front of his elaborate, contemporary, Spanish-style stucco home, Dean acknowledged he was uneasy about profiting from the Watergate affair. He has contracted for a book, planned lecture tours, and is discussing an exclusive contract with NBC.

But, Dean noted, he is still in debt. He has sold a more expensive home, his car, and his boat in order to survive during nearly two years in which "I spent all my time giving testimony, working with investigators and being

incarcerated," he said.

"I'm bothered by it frankly"—the exploitation aspects—but "I don't know what else to do, he said. His book, to be titled "Decision of Consequence," will detail Dean's decision to "leave the ranks" of the faithful around Nixon and begin talking to prosecutors. He conceded that "self-survival . . . a strong instinct" was one of the factors.

Dean said he is also writing a book of essays and a novel about the first black woman candidate for the Supreme Court.

Reacting to G. Gordon Liddy's recent characterization of him as a "Judas," Dean said Liddy must have read a different version of the Bible.

"Judas hadn't forewarned Christ," Dean remarked.