

Tapes Summaries Support Nixon

By Jack Anderson

The secret White House summaries of the Watergate tapes dispute John Dean's explosive Senate testimony about his private conversations with President Nixon.

If it could be proved that Dean told the truth, the President could be impeached for the crime of obstructing justice. But excerpts from the key tapes, quoted in summaries prepared by the White House, support the President's version.

We haven't seen the summaries, which White house chief of staff Alexander Haig keeps in a folder under lock and key. But sources with access to them have told us what the summaries contain.

In methodical, lawyer-like language, the summaries quote the most damaging charges that Dean made in his Senate testimony and refute them with lengthy, verbatim quotes from the Watergate tapes.

Those who have seen the summaries have no way of knowing, of course, what has been left out. In view of the erased 18 minutes of the vital June 20, 1972, tape, it is possible that the White House summaries don't disclose the whole story.

In their present form, however, they support the President's contention that he didn't learn about the Watergate cover-up until March 21, 1973.

Dean is quoted in the March

21 summary as warning the President: "This is going to take you by surprise." Then Dean outlined the involvement of the President's trusted aides in the Watergate cover-up. Dean confessed that he, too, was implicated.

"Oh, John, you have no problem," said the President. But Dean insisted, "Yes, I have."

In a reference to his former right bower, H. R. (Bob) Halde- man, the President asked; "Is Bob involved?" Dean gave an evasive answer. Throughout the conversation, neither Dean nor the President mentioned the left bower, John Ehrlichman.

They discussed the possible guilt of Jeb Stuart Magruder, Frederick LaRue, G. Gordon Liddy, E. Howard Hunt and other Watergate figures.

Dean said it would be necessary to raise \$1 million to pay for the costs of Watergate. "That will be no problem," said the President.

Then he questioned Dean about the purposes of the money. Dean said Hunt was demanding money. The President wanted to know why he wanted it, whether it was for himself or the others. The President also asked how they could be sure Hunt's demands for money would stop.

In the end, the President ruled out any hush payments "That we can't do," he said.

Dean also raised the question of offering executive clemency

to the Watergate defendants. "That's out," the President is quoted in the summary as saying. "We can't offer clemency to anybody."

As Dean spelled out the details, the President referred to the original break-in. "What were they looking for?" he asked.

Of his aides who were implicated, he stated firmly: "Everybody has got to go to the grand jury."

Earlier conversations between the President and Dean on Sept. 15, 1972, Feb. 27, 1973, and March 13, 1973, according to the White House summaries, disclosed none of the details that Dean testified he had given the President. Dean didn't level with the President, if the summaries are accurate, until March 21.

Our sources say the White House has withheld the summaries because of the bad public reaction to his tax, ITT and milk fund disclosures. But apparently, the summaries have been shown to a few top Republicans such as Senate GOP leader Hugh Scott.

Footnote: The summaries give the President's verbatim language, including some startling cuss words.