

# Nixon Tape: 2 Aides Told To 'Cut Loss'

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President Nixon told two of his top aides two weeks after the Watergate break-in that there was a risk of further disclosures in the case and suggested that his lieutenants "cut the loss fast," according to a transcript of part of a White House meeting.

The transcript, which is only two pages long and very ambiguous on some points, nonetheless indicates that the President was aware of some kind of concealment concerning Watergate, though not necessarily an illegal cover-up.

Members of the House Judiciary Committee, which is considering Mr. Nixon's possible impeachment, received copies Wednesday of the brief transcript—which covers part of a meeting on June 30, 1972, attended by the President, former White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman and former Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

A copy of the transcript, in which the three men discuss the resignation of Mitchell as the President's campaign manager, was obtained by the Washington Post. They say after that meeting, on July 1, 1972,

See WATERGATE, A28, Col. 3

*The Sept. 15, 1972 transcript: a side-by-side comparison of the White House and Judiciary Committee versions. Page A26-28.*

## WATERGATE, From A1

Mitchell's resignation was announced, amid strong denials by the White House and the former Attorney General that the resignation had anything to do with the Watergate case.

The White House argued unsuccessfully in court papers last year that the tape of the June 30, 1972, meeting should not be turned over to the Watergate special prosecutor, on grounds that the discussion contained only "a few passing and collateral references to Watergate which are not substantive."

The transcript opens with Haldeman apparently warning of the risks of postponing Mitchell's resignation.

"Well, there is another facet," Haldeman stated. "The longer you wait the more risk each hour brings. You run the risk of more stuff, valid or invalid, surfacing on the Watergate caper—type of thing."

Responding, the President's first comment was:

meeting were relevant to the grand jury's investigation and ordered that portion of the recording turned over to the special prosecutor's office.

It is believed that the five-minute segment of the tape was later turned over by the special prosecutor's office to the Judiciary Committee, as part of a briefcase containing evidence regarding the President's alleged role in the Watergate cover-up, one source said.

The part of the transcript prepared by the Judiciary Committee shows the President, Haldeman and Mitchell discussing how to best handle the public announcement of Mitchell's impending resignation as campaign manager.

In an apparent reference to Mitchell's later public statement that he resigned "to devote more time to my wife and family," the President stated that such a presentation in "human terms" would be advantageous, according to the transcript.

"I think the story is you're positive rather than nega-

"Yes, that's the other thing, if something does come out, but we won't—we hope nothing will. It may not. But there is always the risk."

Haldeman continued: "As of now there is no problem there. As, as of any moment in the future there is at least a potential problem."

"Well, I'd cut the loss fast," the President responded. "I'd cut it fast. If we're going to do it I'd cut it fast. That's my view, generally speaking . . ."

A source close to the House Judiciary Committee said yesterday that the June 30, 1972, transcript was included in the presentation of evidence to Committee members "because it shows part of a pattern to keep the lid on . . . and the President is in on it early."

Another source involved in the Committee's investigation said that the transcript's meaning is not completely clear. "It deals with one of the biggest problems" he said, the necessity to determine if there was any difference between a political

coverup and criminal coverup. According to that source, the two-page transcript shows the President at least involved in a cover-up to avoid political embarrassment.

At the time of the meeting on June 30, 1972, and for months afterward, it was the stated position of the White House, Mr. Nixon and the Committee for the Re-election of the President that the Watergate break-in was in no way authorized by White House or high campaign officials—and that they had no knowledge of the burglars' activities.

In arguing that the June 30 tape recording should not be turned over to the Watergate prosecution force, the President's lawyers contended that there was nothing in the tape "concerning possible criminal conduct or discussions of possible conduct."

However, U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica ruled last Dec. 19 that about five minutes of conversation on the tape of a 75-minute

resignation.

Without the element of surprise, the President stated, "it will be tied right to Watergate." Mr. Nixon finally suggested that Haldeman "can handle it in a way that—Martha's not hurt."

The reference to Martha apparently is to Mitchell's wife, who several days earlier had claimed she was being abused by a Nixon campaign security guard and held as a "political prisoner."

A White House spokesman said last night that there would be "no comment whatsoever" on the transcript.

tive," Mr. Nixon continued, "because as I said as I was preparing to answer for this press conference, I just wrote it out, as I usually do, one way—terribly sensitive (unintelligible).

"A hell of a lot of people will like that answer. They would. And it'd make anybody else who asked any other question on it look like a selfish son of a bitch, which I thoroughly intended them to look like."

The transcript ends with the President, Mitchell and Haldeman discussing the advantages of a surprise announcement of Mitchell's