

Sirica wants Helms returned from Iran to tell about memo

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WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica said Thursday he wants former CIA Director Richard Helms brought to Washington from Iran to testify at the Watergate cover-up trial. Helms has been ambassador to Iran for the past year.

Defense counsel wanted to question Deputy CIA Director Vernon Walters about a memorandum Helms wrote about Watergate on June 28, 1972, 11 days after the break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters.

Prosecutor James F. Neal objected, saying that Walters would testify that he "never saw, heard of or knew of the existence of this memo until June 1973."

Sirica then said, "Why don't you get on the telephone and bring back Ambassador Helms ... I think if I order him brought back he will come."

"Let's do it the right way instead of trying to cross-examine a memorandum."

The memo was classified secret and addressed to the deputy director.

A published report a year ago quoted the memo as instructing the deputy director, who then was Walters, that "we (the CIA) still adhere to the request that they (the FBI) restrict themselves to the personalities already arrested or directly under suspicion and that they desist from expanding this investigation into other areas which may well, eventually, run afoul of our operations."

Defense counsel wanted to ask about the memo in connection with Walters' earlier testimony concerning an alleged attempt by White House aides to use the CIA to try to limit the FBI investigation of the break-in.

Sirica appointed a team of three doctors Wednesday to examine former President Nixon to determine whether Nixon can testify at the trial. At a news conference Thursday, the head of the

medical team, Dr. Charles A. Hufnagel, said he wants more help from the court before trying to conduct the examination.

Hufnagel, chief of surgery at Georgetown University Hospital, said he asked Sirica for clarifications of his instructions. He said he wants the court, rather than the doctors, to contact Nixon's lawyers.

"Otherwise, what are we supposed to do?" Hufnagel asked. "Go out to Long Beach, rent a hotel room and start making phone calls asking whom do we contact?"

Earlier, Fred C. LaRue, who acted as banker for money passed to the Watergate burglars, testified he understood the payments were to keep the break-in defendants from implicating Nixon re-election officials.

"The purpose of the payments, they were to fulfill the commitments made the defendants ... If these commitments weren't kept, the defendants might divulge certain information they had that would lead the Watergate episode back to the Committee to Re-elect the President," LaRue testified at the Watergate cover-up trial.

On trial on charges they conspired to block investigation of the break-in are former Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell, ex-White House aides H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, former Asst. Atty. Gen. Robert C. Mardian and Kenneth W. Parkinson, one-time attorney for Richard M. Nixon's re-election committee.

LaRue, a Mississippi oilman who was a close friend and aide to Mitchell, said the former attorney general seemed surprised when told about the break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters, hours after it occurred on June 17, 1972.

In contrast, he said, Jeb Stuart Magruder's first reaction was, "last night was the night they were supposed to go into the DNC."

LaRue said that he, Mitchell, Magruder and other Nixon campaign officials were in Beverly Hills, Calif., when they got word of the break-in.

William G. Hundley, Mitchell's lawyer, asked if Mitchell seemed surprised.

"To the extent that Mr. Mitchell ever seems surprised," LaRue replied.

LaRue testified in detail about the payments he made and the problems he had raising enough money to meet the demands of the break-in defendants and their lawyers.

He said that in "virtually every instance" the defendants were given less money than they requested.

LaRue told how he got approval to tap a \$350,000 cash fund kept in the White House after other sources were drying up.

He received the money in two deliveries from Gordon C. Strachan, a White House aide on Haldeman's staff.

The first delivery was \$70,000.

In mid-January 1973, LaRue said approval was given to turn over the balance, \$280,000, and it was brought to his apartment in the Watergate complex by Strachan.

LaRue said he was wearing gloves out of fear that if the authorities obtained any of the money it could be traced if his fingerprints were found on it.

Most of the \$280,000 was in \$100 bills.

Under cross-examination by Hundley, LaRue said he never saw any approval given during a March 30, 1972, meeting of the political intelligence plan that led to the break-in.

LaRue, Mitchell and Magruder participated in that meeting which took place in Key Biscayne, Fla.

Magruder has testified that Mitchell approved the plan. LaRue testified that Mitchell said it was a matter that didn't have to be decided right away.