

VAAW Tax Status

Said Questioned

Plot 8/4/73
A FORMER White House legal aide says Charles W. Colson suggested last summer that an effort be made to revoke tax-exempt status for the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW).

Roy Kinsey, an attorney who worked in the White House legal counsel's office, said Colson made the proposal in a memo written while he was a special White House counsel and the VVAW was engaged in protests of administration policy in Vietnam. He said he knew of no action taken.

Colson was said to have asked in his memo if the VVAW then was exempt from federal taxes and, if so, "shouldn't we do something about it?"

Seven VVAW members and a supporter of the group now are on trial in Gainesville, Fla., charged with conspiring to cause a riot at the 1972 Republican National Convention in Miami Beach. The defendants claim the charges are politically motivated.

Kinsey's report of the Col-

son memo was contained in a deposition filed Thursday in U.S. District Court by The Center on Corporate Responsibility, a Ralph Nader-backed organization which has filed a suit contending its own tax-exempt status was denied because of White House pressure.

Kinsey, until last January an aide to former White House Counsel John W. Dean III, said Colson's memo was addressed to Dean and that Dean gave it to him with instructions to take "responsive appropriate action, whatever may be required."

The memo, Kinsey said, referred to a newspaper article or advertisement about the VVAW and that Colson questioned whether the group should not lose its tax exempt status in view of its activities. "Isn't it in violation of the Internal Revenue Code?" Colson was said to have written.

Kinsey said he subsequently verified the VVAW's tax status with Roger Barth, an assistant to the Internal Revenue Service commissioner, but was not sure if he mentioned Colson's suggestion to revoke the group's exemption.

"I may have mentioned something to Roger about that," he said. "I think, as I recall, in later and earlier conversations about other matters, that both Roger and I were very skeptical of Colson memoranda of this nature."

In any case, Kinsey said, "I simply took the memorandum and the statements and put it in my files without further responding to either IRS or Mr. Colson."