

White House Aides War-- Mitchell

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — Embattled former Attorney General John Mitchell said in an interview that "internecine warfare" has broken out among past and present White House aides as "these weak little characters . . . are running for cover."

In a telephone interview late last night with United Press International, Mitchell said he doesn't think he will be indicted in the Watergate scandal.

"I can't imagine what for," he said, "when you've done what you've done in the interest of your country . . ."

Mitchell apparently meant by "weak little characters" his former associates at the Committee for the Re-election of the President who are said to have implicated him in planning the Watergate bugging in testimony before a federal grand jury.

Mitchell made the remarks from New York after he had testified at length there yesterday before a federal grand jury looking into financier Robert L. Vesco's \$250,000 contribution to the Nixon campaign.

Mitchell said he answered

—See Back Page, Col. 4

—From Page 1

all questions "fully, frankly and freely," but he would say no more about his testimony.

The grand jury is believed to be studying whether the unreported \$200,000 donation was an attempt to influence a federal investigation of Vesco, now accused in a civil suit of looting \$224 million in mutual funds.

Vesco, 37, gave the donation to Nixon's chief fund raiser, former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans, three days after the April 7, 1972, deadline requiring disclosure of contributions in federal elections.

The following November, the Securities and Exchange Commission filed suit against Vesco and 40 other individuals and corporations, charging them with swindling \$224 million from four mutual funds controlled by Investors Overseas Services Ltd.

And on Jan. 31, the Nixon campaign committee returned the \$200,000 plus another \$50,000 contribution that Vesco had given by check.

Made Public

The larger contribution was first made public in a 371-page pretrial affidavit in the SEC suit by Harry L. Sears, Vesco's lawyer. Stans claimed the gift was not reported because it had been pledged before the deadline.

Mitchell told newsmen that his appearance was entirely voluntary and that he had appeared previously before the grand jury here.

He also said he had never met Vesco or talked with him by telephone. However, the ABC-TV network later quoted Mitchell in an interview as saying that he had met Vesco "casually" in May or early June of last year.

Stans Before Jury

The New York Daily News quoted sources close to the

investigation today as saying Stans had made at least two appearances before the grand jury.

The News said Stans "was asked to bring records of any phone conversations with William J. Casey, chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and with commission counsel G. Bradford Cook," Casey's successor.

Stans appeared before the grand jury Monday and one time previously, the News said.

Vesco, who has a home in Boonton, N.J., but has been living in the Bahamas and Costa Rica, has failed to appear before the grand jury. An assistant U.S. Attorney claimed he was thrown off Vesco's property in Nassau, the Bahamas, on April 15 after trying to serve the financier with a subpoena.