

USIA Aide Quits-- Watergate Link

Washington

Gordon Strachan, whose name has been linked to the Watergate case, resigned yesterday as general counsel to the United States Information Agency.

A former aide to H. R. Haldeman, who quit yesterday as President Nixon's chief of staff, Strachan said he resigned "after learning that persons with whom he had worked closely at the White House had submitted their resignations today," according to the USIA.

"In view of increasing publicity," USIA said in a statement, "Mr. Strachan concluded that his continuation as general counsel of USIA would impair the agency's relationship with the press and the Congress.

"Mr. Strachan stressed that he had no complicity in the Democratic National Committee break-in or in any alleged attempt to cover it up . . .", the statement said.

Strachan was quoted in transcripts of grand jury testimony as saying Haldeman kept \$350,000 in campaign contributions in a White House safe during the campaign.

Some reports have linked this secret campaign fund to payoffs of "hush money" allegedly paid later to silence Watergate defendants. But the exact purpose of the fund remains unclear.

Strachan was quoted as telling the grand jury that after the election he personally delivered the cash to Frederick C. LaRue, an official of the Nixon campaign and a close associate of former Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

The money apparently never was reported to government auditors who monitor the campaign spending law. Failure to report the existence of the money as of April 7, 1972, or failure to report where it subsequently was spent, would be violations of the law.

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