

Magruder On Nixon's Role

Washington

Jeb Stuart Magruder, who served as deputy campaign manager for the Committee for the Re-Election of the President last year, told an off-the-record political seminar early this year that President Nixon played a vital and active role in campaign planning and decision making until one month after the Watergate break-in.

"There was basically a triad of senior decision makers," Magruder told a Harvard seminar in early January. "the President, Bob Haldeman and John Mitchell — until July of '72. They were in constant consultation with each other over major activities."

A transcript of the two-day proceedings, sponsored by the Kennedy Institute of Politics and the Nieman Foundation at Harvard, was made available yesterday to the New York Times.

Magruder has been reported by federal and Senate sources to be facing grand jury indictment for his role both in the advance planning of the bugging of the Democratic National Committee headquarters on June 17, 1972, and any subsequent cover-up.

Magruder's comments at the seminar offered a view

different from that of the President. In his televised Watergate speech on April 30 Mr. Nixon said that 1972 "was a year of crucially important decisions" in foreign affairs. Thus, he said, "I decided, as the 1972 campaign approached, that the presidency should come first and politics second. To the maximum extent possible, therefore, I sought to delegate campaign operations, to remove the day-to-day campaign decision from the President's office and from the White House."

Elsewhere in the transcript of his seminar remarks, Magruder depicted the President and the White House as being closely involved in crucial decision making at the August convention of the Republican Party. Asked who had made the decision on speeches and platform rhetoric at the convention, Magruder replied:

"We had a joint group that consisted of approximately 20 people — White House aides, Re-election Committee aides, and Republican National Committee aide — and decided the whole convention — with the approval of the President, of course." At least five or six aides from the White House took part in the effort, the former re-election official added.

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