

Dean Tells Inquiry That Nixon Took Part in Watergate Cover-Up for Eight Months; He Also Names Haldeman and Ehrlichman

[3-line, 8-col headline]

REGALLS WARNING

Declares He Told the President Episode Was 'a Cancer'

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 25 —

John W. Dean 3d, asserting that President Nixon had failed to heed a warning that the Watergate case was "a cancer growing on the Presidency," testified today that the President had taken part in the Watergate cover-up for as long as eight months.

Mr. Dean, the dismissed White House legal counsel, told

Excerpts from statement by Dean, Pages 32 to 35.

the Senate's investigating committee that he still clung to a belief that Mr. Nixon "did not realize or appreciate at any time the implications of his involvement."

Nonetheless, in a day-long, matter-of-fact recitation of Mr. Dean's own involvement in the Watergate cover-up and in 47 documents that he submitted to the Senate committee, he described a widespread effort to mask the extent of the conspiracy that he said spread from the White House staff, the Committee for the Re-election of the President, the Department of Justice and, ultimately, to the oval office of the White House.

245-Page Account

His head bowed as he read calmly from a 245-page prepared account, Mr. Dean publicly detailed for the first time the following allegations of Mr. Nixon's own involvement:

The President complimented him last September for having helped to assure that the Government's investigation of the Watergate case "had stopped with [G. Gordon] Liddy," one of the convicted Watergate conspirators.

In February, the President asked him to report directly to Mr. Nixon on what he learned of the continuing investigations because H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, the two senior domestic aides to the President, "were principals in the matter," and also meeting with Mr. Dean was taking up too much of their time.

The President discussed with him on March 13 the demands by the Watergate conspirators for large sums of money to maintain their silence and that when Mr. Dean told him it could cost more than \$1-million, Mr. Nixon "told me that was no problem."

The President had told him of discussions early this year with Mr. Ehrlichman and Charles W. Colson, a former special counsel to the President, about a promise to grant executive clemency to E. Howard Hunt Jr., another of the Watergate defendants.

The President directed that the Administration try to curtail the Senate investigation and block an attempted inquiry into Watergate by the House Banking and Currency Committee last September. The President also ordered aides to make sure that L. Patrick Gray 3d, the former acting director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, would be "pulled up short" in his testimony last spring to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

At one point, in a meeting

Continued on Page 30, Column 1

Dean Tells Inquiry That Nixon Took Part

Ex-Counsel Also Names White House Assistants

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

on March 21, the President discussed with his aides the possibility that the cover-up might be kept secret if John N. Mitchell, the former Attorney General and director of Mr. Nixon's re-election campaign, could be persuaded to assume publicly responsibility for the burglary and wiretapping of the Democratic headquarters at Watergate a year ago.

After he (Dean) had resolved to try to "end the mess without mortally wounding the President" by giving information to Government prosecutors, the President apparently tape recorded an April 15 meeting with him and asked a number of "leading questions" in an evident effort to create a record that would "protect himself."

The President tried to get him, in a "tense conversation" on April 16, to sign two letters of resignation that tended to incriminate Mr. Dean, but he "looked the President squarely in the eyes and told him I would not sign the letters" or become a "White House scapegoat."

On Stand 2 More Days

Mr. Dean's recital to the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities consumed the entire hearing today. Members of the committee will interrogate him tomorrow and Wednesday and they plan to call Mr. Mitchell as the next witness on Thursday.

Mr. Dean did not provide any firsthand information to link the President to prior knowledge of the Watergate burglary and the arrests of five men inside the Democratic National Committee offices. But he told, in a fourth-hand account, of having been advised in February that Mr. Haldeman had "cleared" with the President Liddy's \$250,000 master plan to gather information on the Democratic opposition in the 1972 campaign.

Furthermore, he said he was told last Nov. 15 by Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman that Mr. Nixon had decided he must obtain the resignation of Dwight L. Chapin, the former White House appointments secretary, because of Mr. Chapin's involvement with Donald H. Segretti, the alleged director of a broad campaign of sabotage of Democratic Presidential candidacies.

Reports Burglary Order

The former White House counsel said that another aide to Mr. Nixon, Egil Krogh Jr., had told him on March 29 that the authority for a September, 1971, burglary of the office of a psychiatrist treating Dr. Daniel Ellsberg had come "right out of the oval office."

Mr. Dean's account was the first before the Senate committee to accuse Mr. Nixon categorically of involvement in the cover-up. He sat alone at the witness table, his wife, Maureen, and his lawyers seated one row behind him, to dramatize what he had said last week was the loneliness of his plight in making accusations about the President.

He acknowledged to the committee—before which he appeared only after obtaining a grant of partial immunity from prosecution—that he had been involved himself in "obstructing justice," arranging for "perjured testimony" and in making personal use of \$4,850 of campaign funds.

As he began his appearance before the Senators, Mr. Dean said that he hoped that when all the facts were known "the President is forgiven." He apologized for having to describe illegal acts of "friends" and of individuals he said he admired,

but he went on to recount, calmly, without passion and in narrative form, the involvement of several score Government and campaign officials in the Watergate case.

According to Mr. Dean's testimony, the effort of the Nixon Administration to limit the investigation of the Watergate break-in to those immediately arrested and to cover up any involvement of White House officials in surveillance operations against the Democratic National Committee and Democratic Presidential candidates began within two days of the June 17 break-in.

Furthermore, as Mr. Dean described a succession of meetings, the cover-up involved all those whose names have so far figured in the accounts that have dribbled out of testimony before the grand jury and in interviews with Federal prosecutors, staff lawyers of the Senate select committee and prior testimony before that committee.

In his testimony today, Mr. Dean implicated in the cover-up Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Ehrlichman, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Stans, Mr. Colson; Mr. Gray, Mr. Mardian, Mr. Petersen, Mr. Kalmbach and a host of other officials at the White House and the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Dean's Story

This, in brief, is the story Mr. Dean told today of the mounting efforts, at times approaching the frenetic, to prevent the investigation of the Watergate episode from engulfing the White House:

Landing in San Francisco on June 18, 1972, from Manila, Mr. Dean said, he learned of the break-in in a call from Fred Fielding, his assistant, and immediately departed for Washington.

He said that on Monday, the 19th, he had a succession of meetings and telephone conversations with Jack Caulfield, then with the Treasury; Jeb Stuart Magruder deputy director of the reelection committee, who volunteered that the whole thing was "all Liddy's fault;" Mr. Ehrlichman, who told him to find out what he could; Mr. Strachan and Mr. Colson, the latter assuring him that he had "no involvement in the matter whatsoever" but expressing concern about "the contents" in the safe of E. Howard Hunt Jr.; G. Gordon Liddy, who said Mr. Magruder "had pushed him into doing it" and apologized for his men being caught, and Attorney General Kleindienst, who said the F.B.I. and the District of Columbia police were investigating.

The most important developments on that day, he related, were (1) that Mr. Strachan said to Mr. Dean that Mr. Haldeman had instructed him to winnow the Haldeman files of "damaging materials" such as "Wirefax information from the DNX" and destroy them, and (2) that Mr. Ehrlichman ordered Mr. Dean to "call Liddy to have him tell Hunt to get out of the country," and also to remove the contents of Hunt's safe.

At Mitchell's Place

On the evening of the 19th or 20th, Mr. Dean said, he went to Mr. Mitchell's apartment. Mr. Mardian and Mr. Magruder were there, and Mr. Dean recalled only that there was a discussion of "how to handle the matter from a public relations standpoint."

At a meeting with Mr. Kleindienst—Mr. Dean could not remember whether it was the 19th or the 20th—he said, "I told him that I did not know if the President was involved, but I was concerned" because

TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 1973
in Watergate Cover-Up For 8 Months

if the investigation led to the White House "the chances of re-electing the President would be severely damaged."

At this point, Mr. Dean related, Mr. Kleindienst sent for Mr. Petersen and left the two men together.

"I told him I had no idea where this thing might end," Mr. Dean said, "but I told him I didn't think the White House could withstand a wide-open investigation [and] I had reason—without being specific with him—to suspect the worst."

At mid-morning of June 20, he said, men from the Government Services Administration who had opened Hunt's safe brought the contents to him. He said the contents included a hand gun; a large briefcase containing electronic equipment; a large batch of classified State Department cables from the early years of the Vietnam war, a "bogus cable" implicating the Kennedy Administration in the fall of the Diem regime in 1963; "a number of materials relating to Daniel Ellsberg," who made the Pentagon study of the Vietnam war available to the press; "some materials relating to an investigation Hunt had conducted for Colson at Chappaquiddick," and many memorandums to Mr. Colson on the performance of the "plumbers unit" under Egil Krogh Jr., White House aide, that had been formed on the President's orders to investigate leaks.

Separating Documents

Mr. Dean said that, on his orders, Mr. Fielding separated out the "politically sensitive documents" which were then placed in Mr. Dean's safe. The briefcase was put in a locked closet in his office, he said, and the State Department documents stored in an aide's office pending their return to the department.

Later, he said, when he reported to Mr. Ehrlichman on the contents of Hunt's safe, Mr. Ehrlichman told him "to shred" the bogus cable, the

documents relating to Dr. Ellsberg and other politically sensitive material, and to "deep six" the briefcase with the electronic equipment. Then, Mr. Dean testified:

"I asked him what he meant by 'deep six.' He leaned back in his chair and said, 'You drive across the river on your way home at night, don't you?' I said yes. He said, 'Well, when you cross over the bridge on your way home, just toss the briefcase into the river.'"

Mr. Dean said that he suggested to Mr. Ehrlichman that he get rid of the bugging equipment since he also crossed the river. "He said, no thank you," said Mr. Dean.

Decided Not to Obey

He said he was "very troubled" about Mr. Ehrlichman's instruction, and Mr. Fielding shared his feeling that it would be "an incredible action to destroy potential evidence." Therefore, he said, he decided not to follow the instructions.

On June 21, he stated, he met with Mr. Gray, who told him the F.B.I. had traced four checks totaling \$89,000 contributed by a group of wealthy Texans to a bank in Mexico City, and a \$25,000 check to Kenneth Dahlberg, a Nixon middle Western fund raiser, which represented a donation from Dwayne Andreas, a wealthy Minneapolis businessman who had been a long-time backer of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey. The total of \$114,000 had turned up in the Miami bank account of Bernard L. Barker, one of the Cubans arrested in the Watergate break-in.

Mr. Dean said that Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Stans were concerned that Mr. Andreas not be embarrassed and were worried about the four Mexican checks, possibly, he said, because they might have been illegal corporate contributions.

Mr. Dean said that Mr. Stans had asked Hugh W. Sloan Jr., the campaign treasurer, how the money ended up in Barker's account. Mr. Sloan had explained that he had given the

checks to Liddy to cash, and Liddy had evidently "used Barker to cash them."

Explaining that this money was unconnected with Watergate, Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Stans, Mr. Dean said, asked him "to see if there was anything the White House could do to prevent this unnecessary embarrassment."

Therefore, he said, he talked to Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman, and at their request went to see Mr. Gray on June 22. Mr. Gray, he said, had one theory that Watergate might have been "a C.I.A. operation" because of the former C.I.A. employes involved and planned to talk to agency officials about it. He also, Mr. Dean said, "expressed his awareness of the potential problems" for the administration in the F.B.I. investigation.

Mr. Dean said that on June 23 he reported on his conference with Mr. Gray to Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Ehrlichman and, in a meeting with Mr. Mitchell, Frederick C. LaRue, an aide to Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Mardian. It was in this meeting, he said, that he first heard discussion of "the need for money to take care of those who were involved in the break-in."

It was at the June 23 meeting, he said, following his report that Mr. Gray believed the C.I.A. might be involved, that Mr. Mardian suggested the C.I.A. "could take care of this entire matter if they wished."

Role for C.I.A.

Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Dean said, suggested that he explore with Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman "having the White House contact the C.I.A. for assistance." By this, apparently, Mr. Mitchell meant that the agency should assume responsibility for Watergate by paying those apprehended to keep silent.

Mr. Ehrlichman, Mr. Dean testified, thought Mr. Mitchell's suggestion "a good idea" and ordered Mr. Dean to explore it with Lieut. Gen. Vernon A. Walters, the C.I.A. deputy director, rather than the director, Richard Helms.