

Moore Agrees That Nixon Is

Following are excerpts of the testimony at the Senate select Watergate committee hearing yesterday by White House special counsel Richard A. Moore.

The excerpts begin with questioning by the Senate committee's minority (Republican) counsel, Fred Thompson, concerning Moore's emerging knowledge of the Watergate affair in his contacts with former White House counsel John W. Dean III.

Thompson: Before these meetings (with Dean) of February 10 or February 11, (1973), did you have any knowledge concerning who was responsible for the Watergate break-in, whether it was connected with either the White House or the Committee to Re-Elect, except Mr. (G. Gordon) Liddy or Mr. (James) McCord?

Moore: Mr. Thompson, at that point and for quite a period, for some days thereafter — certainly at that point—I believed implicitly and totally in the President's statement of August 29 that no one in the White House at that time had any knowledge or participation in the Watergate. I believe that that was enlarged at one or more points to include any person in the administration. Nor did I have any knowledge of anyone in the committee. To me, that, I believed implicitly that that was an unauthorized adventure by people who happened to have some \$100 bills in their availability and an adventurous spirit and enjoyed playing James Bond. That was what I thought it was at that very moment.

Thompson: All right. What about after the date of the break-in? Did you have any knowledge concerning efforts to do what has been referred to as engaging in cover-up . . .

Moore: No, sir. It was up to and close to the date of March 19, 1973, where I remember the suspicions that Mr. Dean had intimated. He had said this, you know, in this room, that as you put it, Moore knew some things but not other things. I believe that whatever his (Dean's) knowledge was, he did not wish to involve me with knowledge that would be inappropriate, I think as he did for his young assistant. I think that he did this. I appreciated that in retrospect. But he would make guarded comments because in my judgment, he began to get worried that things were going on and he was afraid that he might be involved.

When I put that together with the Hunt demand (for money), that confirmed my intimation that something was with, in the nature of, payoff was possible. But again, at that time and during the period in March when my suspicions got firmer up, or became firmer, I was not thinking of the White House, I was thinking of people at the (re-election) Committee or related to the Committee who might have conducted this cover-up plan if there were one. And it was very late in the game when, as I indicated, I heard of the existence, Dean told me of the existence of the \$350,000 (used to pay Hunt and the others), I think around the end of the first week in April, when he was — he was, of course, I think getting deeply concerned about this thing.

Thompson . . . I believe you stated that during the first part of March, Mr. Dean first told you about other involvement with regard to the break-in. He mentioned Mr. Liddy, of course. He also mentioned meetings that he had attended with Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Magruder . . .

Moore: I think that the first such conversation took place—I will take March 1st as a rough date . . .

He told me, he said, at the first meeting, we went to Mr. Mitchell's office and there was Liddy and there was Magruder and I, and with a tone of some kind of astonishment, he said, there he was with big charts, put them out, with the craziest, wildest schemes you ever saw. He said they were razzle dazzle charts with code names. He said—I think he might have used a word or two that I shouldn't use on the air. He said, holy so-and-so, the charts had plans for surveillance, electronic surveillance, even kidnaping.

And I, you know, I reacted with disbelief. I said kidnaping? I think I said, what the hell are you talking about?

He said, well, this guy, this guy Liddy, had a plan where the leaders, if the leaders of the demonstrators in San Diego got too tough, we would snatch them, they would be equipped to snatch them and take them to Mexico, and at this point we would assume the demonstrations would fail because the leaders had disappeared.

I said, you know, I think, you know, you have got to be kidding. That was my reaction.

He said, well, I just couldn't believe it; I said, get those charts out of here, destroy them, you shouldn't even be discussing such things in the presence of the Attorney General, let alone carrying them out or even considering them. He said, I turned that off.

He said, but I went to another meeting and he said, now, this one troubles me because I got there late and I don't know what was said or who will say what was said when I wasn't there, he said, because now he still had a chart that was, all this rough stuff was out, but electronic surveillance was still in.

And I said, well, now, you mean in general.

He said, yes, it was a budgetary thing.

And I said, well, was there any—I must preface this by saying that he did say he was concerned about being at this meeting lest that involve him.

I said, well, was there anything in the chart about the Democratic Committee or Watergate, using either or both phrases?

He said, no, there were not specifics, just a principle.

And then, he said, I thought I turned it off.

I did not know and he did not tell me that he later went to Mr. Haldeman, as he so testified, and said he would have nothing to do with anything like this . . .

Thompson. Did you say that he told you that he was concerned for himself because of his presence in those meetings?

Mr. Moore: At a later time, as he told me that he was concerned about his participation in those meetings because the grand jury was back in session or was about to be and he said "I am probably going to have to testify", and he said, "I am going to tell the truth about those meetings", and he said or intimated that Mr. Magruder had not re-

vealed that aspect of the meetings when he had testified either at the trial or at the grand jury, I do not think he specified, but Mr. Magruder was on record under oath, and he said "I am going to raise hell with Magruder when I tell the truth." And later either in the same conversation or within a short time thereafter he said "One of the things that concerns me, is

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that I keep hearing or I have heard that Magruder if he gets in trouble, if he goes down, he is determined to take other people with him." And he said "I can easily see how he would involve me as having been there and having approved these proceedings."

Thompson: All right, when did this conversation take place?

Moore: This was an acceleration of Mr. Deans' problems . . . let us say March 15, Mr. Thompson.

Thompson: When Mr. Dean was telling you these things, I am sure of course they concerned you, you learned about Mr. Mitchell, I am sure, for the first time in these what's been referred to, at least referring to, the horror stories generally or some things that could be seriously embarrassing, as he stated, did you consider going to the President yourself at that time?

Moore: I was considering it seriously, Mr. Thompson but what I had essentially was gossip. What I had was guarded, certainly nothing evidentiary. The procedures were going forward, the grand jury had been reopened. I felt that whatever it was, and this is when almost daily one of us was discussing the possibility of getting the story out. As I mentioned to you, Mr. Ehrlichman, as I said yesterday, phoned me on March 16th, I think it was, to say that the President wanted a full statement of all these things, and I thought this thing was coming to a head but I did not feel I had anything except hearsay and gossip and rumor but I sure was beginning to worry. But also I must say that when he spoke of the Hunt and Liddy, I did not know that that would involve the White House. That could have been something else they had done, I didn't know what it was, and he made it a point never to go over the evening and tell me anything. He never told me, as I recall, of an actual criminal situation or act. He talked about embarrassment and problems.

Later, Moore testified, he urged Dean to tell President Nixon everything about the cover-up, and, on March 21, Dean did so, according to Moore. It was this meeting with Dean that the President referred to in an April 17 public statement that he had begun a new investigation of major new charges that had come to his attention on March 21. Moore said he next



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Richard Moore arrives at witness table to continue his testimony.

met with the President on April 19 to discuss this statement.

Thompson: Tell us about the conversation you had with the President on April 19th.

Moore: Well, when I came in to see him, he had issued his April 17th statement that serious new charges had come to his attention, and so on . . .

I said "I note that March 21st date. John Dean must have been the source of those charges," and he said something to the effect "Oh, did you know about that?" and I said "Yes."

I said "After we met with you the day before John and I talked about it," and I said "I urged him to go in and tell you," and he said, in fact he told me you called him that very night. He said "Yes, I did," and I said "Now the thing that got me committed was that blackmail business with Hunt, did he tell you about that?"

He said, "Yes, yes," he mentioned that, that is what he said, and he said "Imagine," and again no quotation marks please, I have to give you my recollection, and he said, I think

"Imagine or just think of that," he said "I told him it was not only wrong but stupid. That you can't do that. First of all the demands never stop" and he said "Dean said this could go on," and the word "to a million dollars." The President said "That isn't the point. Money is not the point. You could raise money, money is not the point, it's wrong, we could not, shouldn't consider it and it's stupid because the truth comes out anyway." . . . that was his comment to me . . .

Thompson: Did you see the President after April 20th?

Moore: Yes, sir, I saw him on May 8th . . .

That was a rambling discussion. The best way, if I may make a little prolix, if I can get started at the beginning. He had called me, sent for me the weekend of April 30th, the Camp David weekend. I was on my way to my son's wedding in May. I got a message: do not turn around, the President said, enjoy the wedding.

So when I saw him, he wanted to know about the wedding and we got talking about my family, which was fine.

He had just come for a weekend after biting a pretty good bullet in that April 30th situation. He looked fine. He had been in the sun and he looked to me much more relaxed than when I had seen him in these previous meetings. I saw him in. I talked to him a little bit about that, in a sense that, I used the words, you look like your hand's back on the tiller and you are getting back into serious things and so forth.

I had not seen him since the April 30th speech and I talked about that. He always kind of liked to ask me about what some of our mutual friends in California thought. I relayed some of those reactions to him, not all favorable, by the way. I will not go into detail what

the comments were about, but this is what we were talking about.

Then, I talked about—oh, I reported what I had heard myself, about the nomination or appointment of General Haig as the at least acting chief of staff, and of course, it was all favorable, and I felt that that helped give a new lift, that things were getting back on the track. He talked then a little bit about the future again, that he thought that I—but he said, do I think that this knowledge matter—he said, you told me, and he said—very early, he said, now, by the way, I remember your of the cover-up and I take it comment about the cover-up you think we are going in the right direction?

And I said, I certainly do.

And he said at that point—let me just recall—he said, well, now, I am only wondering now, or I wonder now, about—and he had said this once before, but he said

it with greater conviction, he said, I have racked my brain, I have searched my mind. Were there any clues I should have seen that should have tipped me off? He said, maybe there were.

He said, maybe there were. He said, I know how it is when you have a lot on your mind, and I did, but he said, I still wonder. And he said, what do you think?

I said, Mr. President, I did not have that much on my mind and I did not see any clues. If that is all that is worrying you, you can get back to business as far as your role is concerned, and I think that was that.

During yesterday's afternoon session, Sen. Edward Gurney (R-Fla.) questioned Moore about John Dean's allegations that President Nixon knew of executive clemency offers to the convicted Watergate conspirators.

Gurney: I would like to cover one point here of Mr. Dean's testimony when he was before us. I think it is extremely important. That was his description of a March 13 (1973), meeting which he had with President Nixon. This is really the first time, as I see his testimony, that he has any real hard evidence on discussions with the President about Watergate. And I would like to read from his statement, which describes pretty accurately, I guess, what transpired in his mind.

"Toward the end of the conversation"—I am reading from his statement now about the meeting of March 13th.

"Toward the end of the conversation"... I am reading from his statement now about the meeting of March 13th.

"Toward the end of the conversation, we got into a discussion of Watergate matters specifically. I told the President about the fact that there were money demands being made by the seven convicted defendants and that the sentencing of these individuals was not far off. It was during this conversation that Haldeman came into the office. After this brief interruption by Haldeman's coming in, but while he was still there, I

told the President about the fact that there was no money to pay these individuals to meet their demands. He asked me how much it would cost. I told him I could only make an estimate, that it might be as high as a million dollars or more.

"He told me that was no problem, and he also looked over at Haldeman and repeated the same statement. He then asked me who was demanding this money and I told him it was principally coming from Hunt through his attorney.

"The President then referred to the fact that Hunt had been promised executive clemency. He said he had discussed this matter with Ehrlichman, and contrary to instructions that Ehrlichman had given Colson not to talk to the President about it, that Colson had also discussed it with him later. He expressed some annoyance at the fact

that Colson had also discussed this matter with him."

There is a little more, but that is the important part. In other words, Mr. Dean has testified that at this meeting on March 13th, this whole business of Hunt's demands for blackmail—that word isn't used, but certainly, \$1 million must be that—as well as executive clemency were discussed. Now, then, you, of course, had a discussion with Mr. Dean about Hunt's problem and blackmail and—not executive clemency, but the blackmail thing. As I recall your testimony, you were startled and horrified at this when you first learned about it.

Now, then, here's what I want to ask: Did Mr. Dean ever tell you when this matter came up between you and him, or, for that matter, at any time later, I suppose up to March 21st, that he had discussed this matter of the million dollars and executive clemency with the President?

Moore: He never told me that.

Gurney: Now, don't you think that he would have told about that if it actually had come up?

Moore: He was telling me a great deal, Senator.

Senator Ervin: I think we ought to allow a little freedom, but I don't think that is quite a proper question, really.

Gurney: Well, I must say, Mr. Chairman, that I think that question is less free-wheeling than about a million I have heard in this committee room today.

Ervin: If you insist on it, I will permit it.

Gurney: I do insist on it.

Ervin: You are asking him if he doesn't think if Mr. Dean had talked to the President about something, he would have told him?

Gurney: That is exactly what I asked and would the witness please answer?

Moore: There is a—

Gurney: If he desires to.

Moore: Well, it is a very key question and that is why I am hesitating, because I am giving my thought to what he might have done.

Gurney: You see, one of the reasons I am asking this,

and I am sure the chairman knows this, is that a lot of Mr. Dean's testimony had to do with impressions he got—

Moore: I understand.

Gurney:—that the President might know something about Watergate, what was going on in the President's mind. What I would like to know from your deep association with him, at least in this period of time, what you might have known what went on in his mind—Mr. Dean's.

Moore: Well, I would have to say this, that inasmuch as he, that he might well have told me if that had happened, but that the fact that when I asked him on March 20 and he said no, he never told the President any of these things, that might explain better why he didn't tell me, because at least on March 20, the indication that he made to me was that he hadn't told him. So, I would have to say this, Senator, that either John Dean felt that he shouldn't tell me on, at that time if that happened, in which case, he would have persisted in that when I asked him on March 20.

So, I kind of go along with the notion that if that had happened, he might well have told me.

Gurney: This occurred, as I recall, either a day or two before the March 21 meeting, did it not? When he told the President everything?

Moore: Well, my conversation with him, in which he said that he had not told the President any of the things that were bothering him or that he had been hinting at, that conversation was on March 20.

Moore next was questioned by the Senate committee's chairman, Sam J. Ervin, about Moore's contention that the President knew nothing about White House involvement in the Watergate cover-up until Dean went to him and told the whole story on March 21, 1973.

Ervin: Mr. Moore, you have testified that you believe that the President knew nothing about the critical facts relating to Watergate at any time between the 17th day of June, 1972, and the 21st day of March, 1973?

Moore: Yes, sir.

Ervin: That is purely a conjecture on your part, is it not?

Moore: Well, he told me he did not, sir, and I have no evidence to the contrary. So it is a conclusion.

Ervin: Well, it is a conclusion. It is a surmise.

Moore: That is right.

Ervin: . . . Now, I would ask you this question. Do you not agree with me that of all of the inhabitants of this earth, the one best qualified to testify as to the knowledge the President had concerning the Watergate affair or anything else at any time between the 17th day of June 1972 and the 21st day of March 1973, is President Nixon?

Moore: I could agree with that.

Ervin: Yes.

(Laughter)

Ervin: . . . Now, you found out on the morning of June 17, 1972, or shortly thereafter, by reading the press and watching television, that five men had been caught red-handed in an act of burglary in the Democratic National headquarters?

Moore: Yes, I found out the morning of June 18.

Ervin: Now, I will ask you if you did not state . . . that "In one of my talks with the President, the President kept asking himself whether there had been any sign or clue which should have led him to discover the true facts earlier"—that is, earlier than March 21, 1973?

Moore: Yes, sir.

Ervin: I will ask you, during the approximately two months after the burglary at the Watergate was discovered if the news media—that is, the newspapers, and TV and radio—did not . . . many statements, concerning the Watergate matter.

. . . I ask you, can we safely assume that Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Ehrlichman, Mr. Chapin, Mr. Colson, Mr. Strachan, Mr. Ziegler, Mr. Dean, Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Stans, Mr. Magruder, Mr. Sloan, and Mr. Porter and the President, read the newspapers?

(Laughter)

Moore: I am not an eyewitness to that, sir, but I would make that assumption.

Ervin: Well, you certainly do not know that Mr. Dean did anything to keep those parties from reading the newspapers and watching television and radio?

Moore: No, sir.

(Laughter)

Ervin: I will ask you if the second fact that came out,

or the critical fact, was not that McCord had the National Democratic headquarters in the Watergate bugged and had furnished the data obtained by the bugging to some person or persons in the committees, in the campaign committees of President Nixon?

Moore: That is a newspaper item?

Ervin: Yes. Is that not what the newspapers told everybody in the District of Columbia who read them and the TV, everybody who watched TV?

Moore next was questioned about whether he had read newspaper disclosures that money found on one of those arrested in the Watergate had been traced to Nixon campaign funds. Moore said he had.

Ervin: I ask you if during this same time period, these news media didn't proclaim these further statements—contain these further statements? Instead of depositing such funds in banks in accordance with good business practices, that Secretary Stans, as director of the finance committee, kept hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash in safes in the offices of the Nixon campaign committees.

Moore: That is what I understand.

Ervin: And I will ask if the same news media didn't further proclaim this within that time period: that shortly prior to the burglary, Hugh W. Sloan, Jr., treasurer of the Stans committee, delivered various sums totaling \$199,000 in cash to G. Gordon Liddy, the general counsel of the Stans Committee?

Moore: Yes, sir.

Ervin: And didn't the same news media, within the same period of time, state that Stans told Sloan after Sloan made this, expressed his misgivings, that he, Stans, consulted Mitchell and that after such consultation informed Sloan that Mitchell and he, Stans,

authorized Magruder to direct him—that is Sloan—to make these disbursements to Liddy?

Moore: I assume so, sir. You are reading from the summary. I assume all these things as—

Ervin: —now I have recounted a great many things, all of which except one, I think you admit, were made known by the news media within two months after the Watergate burglaries were discovered. Can you imagine any better way on which a person interested in the President's campaign and people who read the Washington papers and the New York Times and watched television and lis-

tened to the radio could have had more reason to suspect that something was rotten in the committees to re-elect the President than were divulged by these news media?

Moore: Well, first of all, as I said, the President told me, I think it was on May 8th, that he had racked his brain as to the cover-up, and he also told me, sir, that he had, it was his firm conviction which at that time was confirmed by every investigation, the grand jury, the trial, and so forth, that the only culpable persons were the seven defendants.

Ervin: Well, you are telling me something I didn't ask you about. I haven't asked you about what the President told you, I have been asking what the radio and television and the papers had told you.

Moore: And your question is?

Ervin: Yes. Didn't you learn from the press and the radio and the TV in connection with the matters I have recounted to you, generate a suspicion in your mind that something was rotten in the Committee to Re-Elect the President?

Moore: Yes, yes, in the Committee to Re-Elect the President.

Ervin: Yes.

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Don't you think that you, as a friend of the President, as an aide to the President, owed a duty to the President to go to him and tell him that you were suspicious that something was rotten in the committees charged with his re-election and that something ought to be done about it?

Moore: Well, I picked—the Watergate itself had demonstrated that that was a pretty sour operation in that sense, that that could be allowed to happen.

Ervin: Well, the President said it was unauthorized. Don't you think somebody close to the President or the President himself should take some action to see whether it had happened?

Moore: Well, the President, it either happened or the President was told and he believed that it happened

and that an investigation was made and that the results were unequivocally that no one in the White House was involved. Clearly two men in the committee were involved.

Ervin: You found out in April, 1973, that Mr. Hunt had been an accessory before the fact to the burglarizing of the office of the psychiatrist of Ellsberg in September, 1971, didn't you?

Moore: I found out that there was a—yes, sir.

Ervin: Yes.

Moore: That is roughly right.

Ervin: And you found out that Mr. Hunt, you had learned previously to that time that Mr. Hunt was a paid consultant of the White House?

Moore: I learned that in the newspapers that he had been a paid consultant of the White House.

Ervin: And you still tell me, Mr. Moore, I believe you told the committee, that you had suspicion but you don't think there was anything at all that ought to have indicated to President Nixon or any of his, Mr. Haldeman or Mr. Ehrlichman prior to the 21st day of March that there was something rotten in the committees or in the White House?

Moore: Well, the President has himself said, and I have said in my statement, that I wish I had been more skeptical and I think he is the first one, he said it and he believes it, but in looking back, and it is always easy afterward, certainly Mr. Hunt, I am not defending anything that Mr. Hunt did, I had no knowledge of it, the fact is that the President was operating with the knowledge that he, that was before him, and he had no intimation, nothing direct, no one brought to him is my firm conviction of anything specific that would have triggered or clued the notion this cover-up was going on if it involved White House people particularly.

Ervin: Well, everybody in Washington, D. C. had an opportunity to learn this ex-

cept the President, didn't he?

Moore: Well, Mr. Chairman, in all fairness, I think that everybody in Washington, D.C., had a different, the people have their own view points and we have a lot of people here who are making a lot of charges.

Ervin: Do you know what the evidence was produced down there at the trial.

Moore: No, sir, I didn't attend the trial.

Ervin: Don't you know that the evidence shows that Mr. Magruder had paid \$199,000 in cash to Liddy before the trial?

Moore: Well, yes, sir, I understand that.

Ervin: And don't you know that the tracks led right straight from the Watergate into the offices of the Committee to Re-elect the President, just as straight as a marten going to its home?

Moore: Yes, sir.

Ervin: And yet nobody knew anything wrong?

Moore: Again in fairness, Mr. Chairman, this track led to a cash supply that was made available to Mr. Liddy with no responsibility of having to account for it and that is always a very bad situation.

Ervin: Yes.

Moore: And whether anybody knew what he was doing was a separate question.

Ervin: When did you first start suspecting that something was rotten in the committees to secure the re-election of the President?

Moore: Well, I would say the morning I got a phone call that said, what do you think of that caper — that burglary, on Sunday morning, and I picked it up and read it. I said something like, sure is. This was not Sunday. It was when I learned that McCord and Liddy were involved, within that week, that obviously, something was rotten. I thought that the rotten had been exposed and there was the cancer and there it was. That is what I thought.

Ervin: You do not have any information that anybody, any aide of the President, kept either Mr. Haldeman or Mr. Ehrlichman or the President from reading the newspapers or listening to the radio or watching television during this time?

Moore: I have heard it alleged, sir, but it is not true. The President reads newspapers and — of course.

Ervin: And even Mr. Dean could not keep him, or anybody up there, from reading the newspapers or listening to the radio.

Moore: The grand jury was also reading the same newspapers and — no.

Ervin: Thank you, Mr. Moore.

Moore: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ervin: Senator Baker.

Baker: Thank you very much.