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Excerpts From Haldeman's Testimony

TUESDAY, JULY 31, 1973

Before the Select Panel on Watergate

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 30—Following are excerpts from the testimony of H. R. Haldeman, former White House chief of staff, before the Senate Watergate Committee today.

MR. HALDEMAN: Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate select committee. As you know, I met voluntarily with the Senate committee staff on two occasions for lengthy interviews to answer any questions they might want to ask of me; and I requested nearly three months ago an early opportunity to appear before this committee.

I have also appeared before, and cooperated as fully as I could with another committee of the Senate, a committee of the House of Representatives, the United States attorneys, the grand jury and the attorneys taking depositions for the Democratic National Committee in their civil suit, all in regard to the matter before this committee. In all of these appearances I have never taken the Fifth Amendment and I have never sought immunity or any other kind of deal.

During the three months since I resigned from the White House staff, I have scrupulously avoided discussing any substantive aspects of the Watergate case or related matters in the press, despite enormous pressure. I have carefully avoided leaking any information, expressing any opinion or conclusion, answering any charges or commenting on any testimony by others. As I have stated countless times to reporters and to the TV cameras, I will cooperate fully with the appropriate judicial and legislative bodies involved in this case. I feel they are the proper and appropriate forums in which to present complete explanation and answer fully all questions.

Confidence in President

On each of these occasions, I have further stated to the press that I have full confidence that when the entire truth is known, it will be clear to the American people that President Nixon had no knowledge of or involvement in either the Watergate affair itself or the subsequent efforts of a "cover-up" of the Watergate. It will be equally clear, despite all the unfounded allegations to the contrary, that I had no such knowledge or involvement.

I had the rare privilege for four years of serving on the White House staff under one of America's greatest Presidents and with the most outstanding, dedicated, and able group of people with whom I have ever worked. Those who served with me at the White House had complete dedication to the service of this country. They had great pride in the President they served and great pride in the accomplishments of the Nixon Administration in its first four years.

Figures in Senate Inquiry

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 30—Following are the names of individuals who figured today in hearings by the Senate select committee on the Watergate case:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Sam J. Ervin Jr., North Carolina Democrat, chairman.
- Herman E. Talmadge, Democrat of Georgia.
- Daniel K. Inouye, Democrat of Hawaii.
- Joseph M. Montoya, Democrat of New Mexico.
- Howard H. Baker Jr., Republican of Tennessee.
- Edward J. Gurney, Republican of Florida.
- Lowell P. Weicker Jr., Republican of Connecticut.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL

- Samuel Dash, chief counsel and staff director.
- Fred D. Thompson, chief minority counsel.
- Rufus L. Edmisten, deputy counsel.
- Terry F. Lenzner, assistant chief counsel.
- James Hamilton, assistant chief counsel.
- David M. Dorsen, assistant chief counsel.
- H. William Shure, assistant minority counsel.

WITNESSES and COUNSEL

- John D. Ehrlichman, former White House adviser.
- H. R. Haldeman, former White House chief of staff.
- John J. Wilson, counsel for Mr. Ehrlichman and Mr. Haldeman.

PERSONS NAMED IN TESTIMONY

- Charles W. Colson, former counsel to the President.
- John W. Dean 3d, former counsel to the President.
- Dr. Daniel J. Ellsberg, key witness in Pentagon papers case.
- Dr. Lewis Fielding, Dr. Daniel J. Ellsberg's psychiatrist.
- E. Howard Hunt Jr., ex-White House aide, pleaded guilty in the Watergate break-in.
- Herbert W. Kalmbach, President Nixon's former personal attorney.
- Egil Krogh Jr., former assistant to Mr. Ehrlichman.
- G. Gordon Liddy, former White House aide convicted in Watergate break-in.
- Jeb Stuart Magruder, former deputy director of the Committee for the Re-election of the President.
- John N. Mitchell, former Attorney General and former chief of the re-election committee.
- Gordon C. Strachan, former assistant to Mr. Haldeman.

I cannot imagine anything more satisfying than have had the opportunity to play a part in the first Nixon Administration — which brought about the end of America's longest and most difficult war; the end of the cold war which had been a fact of life for as long as many of us can remember; the opening of communications and dialogue with the leaders of the Soviet Union and the leaders of the Peoples Republic of China; the building of a structure that can well lead not to just one but many generations of peace; the start of the return of the power of government to the people by revenue-sharing and Federal reorganization; the whole new approach to domestic programs resigned to bring those programs into line with the real people. We all felt and still feel that the first four years was a time of laying the groundwork for even greater accomplishments in the second term and we have complete faith that the promise will be met.

A Great 'Tragedy'

One of the great tragedies of our time is that, for the moment at least, a cloud hangs over the accomplishments of the past four years and the promise of the next four years because of Watergate, its aftermath and related matters. This has

spawned an unceasing barrage of charges and countercharges, allegations, innuendo, hearsay, rumor, speculation, hypothesis, which I devoutly hope these hearings and the concurrent work of the Justice Department and the special prosecutor will bring to an early and definite conclusion so that the nation and its leadership can again turn their thoughts and their efforts to more productive enterprises.

During this period with its intense concentration on every aspect of the Watergate and everything related to it, the sense of proportion regarding the time period under study becomes grossly distorted. In looking at the year 1972, it is important — especially now during these hearings — to try to keep a sense of perspective as to where things fit. The harmless eye of a fly viewed under a microscope can become a terrifying object in spite of its actual insignificance. Likewise, the Water-

gate viewed under the microscope of this hearing and the intensive coverage of all of its aspects can become a terrifying sight if one loses track of the perspective in which it should be viewed. This is in no way an attempt to minimize the importance of the problems posed by the Watergate or the necessity to get to the truth and to take the necessary actions to deal with the facts and prevent a recurrence.

Based on Memory

Mr. Chairman, my statement and testimony before this committee will be based on my best recollection after a careful review of logs, notes, et cetera, to try to reconstruct the facts as best I can.

I am severely limited in this effort because, despite the tense focus of attention today on each minute event of last year, at the time they happened most of these things were not of great importance and were not recorded in any detail, if at all. This is especially true for 1973. From then on my Presidential notes regarding the Watergate case are much more voluminous because the President was then directing a great deal of his attention to the Watergate matter, whereas he had not done so earlier.

I have had access, under the supervision of a Secret Service agent, to my handwritten notes regarding conversations with the President which are in the President's files. I have not been permitted to make copies of them or to take notes from them. I have been under exactly the same restrictions as Gordon Strachan described. My files are in the same room as his. I kept no records of my own; all my records are in the President's file.

I might mention that my handwritten notes on sheets of yellow paper from June, 1972, and through February, 1973, make a stack about eight inches high. All of the pages on which there is any reference or any not regarding Watergate during that period add up to less than one-eighth of an inch. In other words, my Watergate notes amount to no more than 1 per cent of my total notes during that period.

Few Notes on Dean

Until March I made very few notes regarding conversations with John Dean because these conversations were not reported to the President except, of course, the assurance always that no one in the White House was involved. Through the period of March and April 1973 I have quite detailed notes regarding Dean conversations because at that time he was giving me information for the President.

Turning to the question of security problems, it has been alleged that there was an atmosphere of fear at the White House regarding security matters. I can state categorically that there was no climate of fear at all. There was, however, a healthy and valid concern for a number of matters in the general area of national security and for

a number of other matters in the general area of domestic security. This was a rational concern, and it was of sufficient import to require that considerable thought be given to steps to combat the actual problems and potential dangers that existed.

With regard to leaks of information, especially in the national security area, it became evident in 1969 that leaks of secret information

were taking place that seriously jeopardized a number of highly sensitive foreign policy initiatives that had been undertaken by the Administration, including the ending of the war in Vietnam, the Middle East crisis, nuclear arms limitation, and the establishment of new relationships among the great powers. These initiatives were closely interrelated; leaks about any one of them could seriously endanger all of them; and such leaks were taking place.

Wiretap Program

In order to deal with these leaks, a program of wiretaps was instituted in 1969 and continued into early 1971. The President has stated that each of these taps was undertaken in accordance with procedures that were legal at the time and in accord with long-standing practice in this area. This program was authorized by the President of the United States and the wiretaps were determined by coordination between the director of the F.B.I. The President's assistant for national security affairs and the Attorney General of the United States.

In 1970, the domestic security problem reached critical proportions as a wave of bombings and explosions, rioting and violence, demonstrations, arson, gun battles and other disruptive activities took place across the country — on college campuses primarily — but also in other areas.

In order to deal with this problem, the President set up an interagency committee consisting of the directors of the F.B.I., the C.I.A., the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency. This committee was instructed to prepare recommendations for the President — which they did. The report they submitted included specific options for expanded intelligence operations and Mr. Huston, the White House staff man for this project was notified by a memorandum from me of the approval of the President.

As has been reported, Director Hoover expressed opposition to parts of this program and as a result, the agencies were subsequently notified that the approval had been recinded. This approval was withdrawn before the plan was implemented so the net result was that it never went into effect.

Instead of this program, an Intelligence Evaluation Committee was created in December of 1970 that included representative of the White House, C.I.A., F.B.I., N.S.A. and the departments of Justice, Treasury and Defense and the Secret Service. The mission of this committee

was to improve coordination among the intelligence community and to prepare evaluations and estimates of domestic intelligence.

Pentagon Papers

In mid-1971, The New York Times started publication of the so-called Pentagon papers which had been stolen from the sensitive files of the Departments of State and Defense and the C.I.A. and which covered military and diplomatic moves in a war that was still going on. The implications of this security leak were enormous, and it posed a threat so grave as to require, in the judgment of the President and his senior advisors, extraordinary action. As a result, the President approved creation of the special investigations unit within the White House which later became known as the plumbers. John Ehrlichman was responsible for supervision of this group, Mr.

Krogh and Mr. Young of the Domestic Council and National Security Council staffs were the two principal staff members. While I was aware of the existence and general purpose of this unit, I was not familiar with any of its specific activities or assignments.

[This section of Mr. Haldeman's prepared statement concerns a meeting in President Nixon's office on March 21, 1973, in which John W. Dean 3d, the former White House counsel, has testified that President Nixon indicated his knowledge of the Watergate cover-up. Mr. Haldeman said today he was present for about half of the meeting, and heard White House tapes of the entire meeting sometime last April. Mr. Haldeman's recollection in the testimony is based, he said, on both the tapes and his personal attendance at parts of the meeting.]

ADDENDUM

March 21st meeting.

I was present for the final 40 minutes of the President's meeting with John Dean on the morning of March 21. While I was not present for the first hour of the meeting, I did listen to the tape of the entire meeting. Following is the substance of that meeting to the best of my recollection.

Dean reported some facts regarding the planning and the break-in of the D.N.C. [Democratic National Committee] and said again there were no White House personnel involved. He felt Magruder was fully aware of the operation, but he was not sure about Mitchell. He said that Liddy had given him a full rundown right after Watergate and that no one in the White House was involved. He said that his only concerns regarding the White House were in relation to the Colson phone call to Magruder which might indicate White House pressure and the possibility that Haldeman got some of the "fruits" of the bugging via Strachan since he had been told the "fruits had been supplied to Strachan.

He outlined his role in the January planning meetings and recounted a report he said he made to me regarding the second of those meetings.

Regarding the post-June 17th situation, he indicated concern about two problems, money and clemency. He said that Colson had said something to Hunt about clemency. He did not report any other offers of clemency although he felt the defendants expected it. The President confirmed that he could not offer clemency and Dean agreed.

'A Bad Appearance'

Regarding money, Dean said he and Haldeman were involved. There was a bad appearance which could be developed into a circumstantial chain of evidence regarding obstruction of justice. He said that Kalmbach had raised money for the defendants; that Haldeman had okayed the return of the \$350,000 to the committee, and that Dean had handled the dealings between the parties in doing this. He said that the money was for lawyers' fees.

He also reported on a current Munt blackmail threat. He said Hunt was demanding \$120,000 or else he would tell about the seamy things he had done for Ehrlichman. The President pursued this in considerable detail, obviously trying to smoke out what was really going on. He led Dean on regarding the process and what he would recommend doing. He asked such things as—well, this is the thing you would recommend? We ought to do this? Is that right? And he asked where the money would come from? How it would be delivered? And so on.

He asked how much money would be involved over the years and Dean said probably a million dollars — but the problem is that it is hard to raise. The President said there is no problem in raising a million dollars, we can do that, but it would be wrong. I have the clear impression that he was trying to find out what it was Dean was saying and what Dean was recommending. He was trying to get Dean's view and he was asking him leading questions in order to do that. This is the method the President often used when he was moving toward a determination.

Other Activities

Dean also mentioned his concern about other activities getting out, such as the "Ellsberg" break-in, something regarding Brookings, the other Hunt activities for Colson on Chappaquiddick, the Segretti matter, use of Kalmbach funds, etc.

When I entered the meeting, there was another discussion regarding the Hunt threat and the President again explored in considerable depth the various options and tried to draw Dean out on his recommendation.

The meeting then turned to the question of how to deal with the situation and the President mentioned Ehrlichman's recommendation that everybody should go to the grand jury. The President told Dean to explore all of this with Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Mitchell.

There was no discussion while I was in the room, nor



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William Hundley, lawyer for John N. Mitchell, rising to object to a discussion of the Vesco case. Mr. Mitchell and Maurice H. Stans are under indictment in the case in-

volving campaign funds. John D. Ehrlichman, right, the witness at the time, and John J. Wilson, middle, his lawyer, wait. Committee stopped questioning on the subject.

do I recall any discussion on the tape on the question of clemency in the context of the President saying that he had discussed this with Ehrlichman and with Colson. The only mention of clemency was Dean's report that Colson discussed clemency with Hunt and the President's statement that he could not offer clemency and Dean's agreement—plus a comment that Dean thought the others expected it.

Dean mentioned several times during this meeting his awareness that he was telling the President things the President had known nothing about.

I have to surmise that there is a genuine confusion in Mr. Dean's mind as to what happened on March 13th vs. what happened on March 21, because some of what he describes in quite vivid detail as happening on

March 13 did, in fact, happen on March 21. The point about my laughing at his being more knowledgeable next time, and the question that he says he raised on March 13 regarding the million dollars are so accurately described, up to a point, as to what really happened on March 21 that I believe he is confused between the two dates.

Disagreement on Clemency

Mr. Dean's recollection that the President had told him on March 13 that Ehrlichman had discussed an offer of clemency to Hunt with him and he had also discussed Hunt's clemency with Colson is at total variance with everything that I have ever heard from the President, Ehrlichman or Colson. I don't recall such a discussion in either the March 13 or the March 21 meeting.

Now, to the question of impression. Mr. Dean drew the erroneous conclusion that the President was fully knowledgeable of cover-up at the time of the March 13 meeting in the sense (1) of being aware that money had been paid for silence and that (2) the money demands could reach a million dollars and that the President said that was no problem. He drew his conclusion from a hypothetical discussion of questions since the President told me later that he had no intention to do anything whatever about money and had no knowledge of the so-called cover-up.

I had no difficulty accepting the President's version, based on years of very close association with President Nixon and on hundreds of hours meetings with him. Having observed the Presi-

dent all those years, in many different situations, it was very clear to me on March 21 that the President was exploring and probing; that he was surprised; that he was trying to find out what in the world was going on; he didn't understand how this all fit together and he was trying to find out. He was pushing hard for that kind of information about Mr. Dean.

The President further was concerned about how this ought to be dealt with and he was interested in getting views from Ehrlichman, Dean, Haldeman and Mitchell because he felt that those views might be enlightening as to what the true situation was. For that reason he asked that a meeting be held with the four of us in the immediate future and such a meeting was scheduled for the next day.