

## Report on Haldeman Aide's Testimony

# 'Secret Defense Fund'

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### Washington

President Nixon last year told his White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman that money from a secret fund would be made available for Haldeman's legal defense in the Watergate case, according to accounts of secret testimony given to the Senate Watergate committee.

The President told Haldeman that the money was kept by Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo, the sources said, and included as much as \$400,000.

Under normal circumstances, there is nothing illegal about the payment by any-

one of legal fees for criminal defendants.

However the office of the special Watergate prosecutor has charged in the Watergate coverup indictment that payments made in 1972 and 1973 to the seven original Watergate defendants were illegal because the money was allegedly paid to buy the silence of the defendants.

The coverup indictment against the President's former aides, including Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, charged that the alleged purchase of silence constituted an obstruction of justice.

The information on the defense fund was supplied to the Senate committee last

month by Lawrence M. Higby, who was previously one of Haldeman's chief assistants in the White House, the sources said.

According to the accounts of Higby's testimony, the President made the offer to Haldeman about April 30, 1973, the day Haldeman resigned from the White House staff.

The sources said that Higby told Senate investigators that money from the fund also was going to be made available to Ehrlichman.

Asked about the allegations, Deputy White House Press Secretary Gerald Warren declined to confirm or deny them. He, however, issued the following statement:

"This pattern of contrived and selected leaks from the Senate Watergate secret testimony is becoming outrageous. Once again the testimony given in private has been selectively leaked in an obvious attempt to prejudice public opinion against the President. Eventually members of the committee will see how the staff has misused the committee, violated due process and made a mockery of congressional investigative authority."

John J. Wilson, the attorney for Haldeman's aid that he was unaware of any such arrangement to pay the legal fees through a secret fund by Rebozo or anyone.