

Reveal Dean's plan to spy on convention peace groups

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WASHINGTON—John W. Dean III, the former White House counsel, tried to set up an undercover espionage-and-intelligence ring to infiltrate antiwar protest groups before the Democratic and Republican national conventions last year, Government sources have disclosed.

The sources said yesterday that Dean summoned an Interior Department official to his office last May, two months before the Democratic convention in Miami Beach, and offered him a large sum of cash either to participate in or to direct an undercover network.

The official, Kernith Tapman, who handled negotiations for the Interior Department before the massive antiwar demonstrations in Washington in 1969 and 1970, acknowledged in a phone interview that



Watergate scandal

Dean had made the offer. Tapman refused to discuss the incident further.

Other sources familiar with the incident said Tapman was distressed at Dean's offer and promptly rejected it. Investigators have not yet determined whether the infiltration program ever was set up before the convention, the sources said.

THE REPORT OF Dean's recruiting attempt was the first linking him to direct involvement in any Republican spying operations that, by May of last year, had been

set up elsewhere in the White House and in the Committee for the Reelection of the President. Dean previously had acknowledged participating—under orders, he maintains—in the coverup of the June 17 break-in at the Democrats' Watergate offices in Washington.

Other developments:

John J. Caulfield, a Treasury Department official whose name has come up in the Watergate case, has taken voluntary leave from his job, effective yesterday, the department said.

Caulfield is assistant director for criminal enforcement in the department's alcohol, tobacco, and firearms division.

The Los Angeles Times said yesterday

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that Caulfield tried to persuade convicted Watergate conspirator James W. McCord Jr. to remain silent about the bugging incident in return for a promise of executive clemency. The newspaper quoted a source as saying that Caulfield twice met secretly with McCord during the Watergate trial in January. Caulfield is a former White House aide to Dean and John D. Ehrlichman.

Time magazine, quoting a close associate of Dean, said that Dean and his wife Maureen had been working "into the nights" to gather evidence that the former white House aide did not meet with President Nixon between the Watergate arrests and Nixon's Aug. 29 statement that his aides were not involved. "That would make an outright lie of Nixon's press conference statement," Time said. "Unless someone above Dean has misled the President." Dean supposedly was investigating watergate for Nixon during that time.

● Sen. Howard H. Baker Jr. [Tenn.],

ranking Republican on the Senate Watergate investigating committee, said in a television interview that he "would not exclude the possibility" that Nixon would be asked to "state his side of the case" to the committee. Baker also said that if Nixon were found guilty of involvement in Watergate or its coverup, "clearly he would be impeached."

● Elliot L. Richardson, who has said he would appoint a special prosecutor for the case, undergoes a third day of questioning today before the Senate Judiciary Committee on his nomination to become attorney general.

Richardson said before the hearings recessed Thursday that he hoped by this time to have selected a prosecutor and turned his name over to the FBI for security checks.

● Agriculture Secretary Earl L. Butz said the Senate Watergate committee has begun a "political inquisition" led by a publicity-hungry chairman.

The hard-line attack by Butz was dis-

missed by Chairman Sam J. Ervin Jr. [D., N. C.] as an "absurdity." The exchange came as the committee prepared to open public hearings Thursday.

● Former acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray III was told by two FBI officials several weeks after the Watergate break-in that there were signs of a coverup, The Washington Post reported.

The Post quoted sources as saying the officials urged Gray to alert Nixon, but that he refused on grounds that it might seem that he was seeking Nixon's guidance.

It could not be determined, the Post said, whether this occurred before a July 6 phone call in which Gray reportedly told Nixon he was disturbed that White House aides were confusing the FBI's Watergate investigation.

● Time magazine reported that one of those aides, Dean, was asked by Nixon two months ago to sign a virtual confession that he was the only White House aide to cover up Watergate facts.

● Dean, who has vowed that he will not be made a scapegoat in the case, was quoted in an interview with Newsweek magazine as saying he did not write the report, which Nixon said was the basis of his Aug. 29 statement that no aide then in the White House was involved in Watergate.

"Here was the President of the United States reassuring the American people on the basis of a report that didn't exist," Newsweek quoted Dean as saying.

Time carried a similar report quoting a Dean associate as saying Dean made no Watergate investigation for Nixon, despite widespread assumptions to the contrary.



Who's crazy?

The reports of Martha Mitchell's breakdown have, apparently, been greatly exaggerated. Mrs. Mitchell, reported by Time magazine to be committed to a mental institution, phoned reporters from her home yesterday to say, "You can tell the people who are saying that stuff that they're the ones who are crazy!"