

Haldeman Admits Spy Role But No Crimes, 5 in GOP Say

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Washington — H. R. Haldeman, President Nixon's chief of staff, is reported to have told a group of Republican congressmen that he was personally responsible for organizing a political intelligence operation on Mr. Nixon's behalf last year, but that it involved no illegal activities.

Such intelligence-gathering units are a standard feature of virtually all major political campaigns. In their simplest form, they involve collecting newspaper clippings and other publicly available material.

A more sophisticated operation, used by both parties in presidential campaigns, involves efforts to obtain advance copies of speeches, campaign schedules and other materials.

The Source

Haldeman's comments were made March 28 before the Wednesday Group, an organization of moderate and progressive Republican members of the House of Representatives. Five of them who were present provided essentially identical accounts of what tran-

pired but requested anonymity.

One of the sources said, "He told us they hoped to have tapes—and he used the word 'tapes' — of everything the opposition candidates said in public."

The House members said Haldeman provided few details about the intelligence unit, but one said: "It was apparent that he was talking about more than just a newspaper-clipping operation; they had men in the field."

'Secret Fund'

Haldeman denied newspaper accounts that he had access to a "secret fund" of hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, reportedly used to pay for sabotage activities, according to the congressmen. They said Haldeman reported that even his wife had asked about the "secret fund."

Haldeman became the subject of controversy when Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (R-Conn.) said that although he had no evidence linking the White House aide to illegal activities, he believed Haldeman should resign because his "responsibility as chief of staff" must have included knowledge of "a disruption crew" at the Nixon campaign committee.