

HALDEMAN STATES WATERGATE DOUBT DISTURBED NIXON

Says President Repeatedly
Pressed Staff to Clear Up
Case in Public's Mind

2D-TERM PERIL IS SEEN

6/8/73
Former White House Adviser
Gives 287-Page Deposition
in Suit by Democrats

By ANTHONY RIPLEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 7—
President Nixon urged his
aides, both before and after the
election last Nov. 7, to clear up
the Watergate case and ease
public doubts, according to
H. R. Haldeman, former White
House chief of staff.

He said that during the Pres-
idential campaign, Mr. Nixon
was concerned about Water-

Excerpts from deposition by
Haldeman, Page 18.

gate's political impact. Once he
was re-elected, the President
wanted the matter disposed of
"so that it wouldn't be hanging
over into the second term,"
Mr. Haldeman said.

His picture of the President's
concern over the impact of the
June 17, 1972, break-in at
Democratic National Committee
headquarters in the Watergate
complex was contained in a
287-page deposition taken in
private May 22, 24 and 25 and
made public today.

The deposition was given in
the Democratic party's \$6.4-
million damage suit against the
Committee for the Re-election
of the President and other
Nixon supporters.

Conflict About Mitchell

Mr. Haldeman's testimony
conformed in many respects to
that of his friend and associate
of many years, John D. Ehrlich-

man, the President's former
assistant for domestic affairs,
which was released two days
ago. Mr. Nixon described the
two men as his "most trusted
advisers" on the day they re-
signed.

Both Mr. Haldeman and Mr.
Ehrlichman defended the Presi-
dent and placed blame on John
W. Dean 3d, the President's
former counsel, and Jeb Stuart
Magruder, who was second in
command at the re-election
committee.

The two former White House
aides offered contrasting testi-
mony on John N. Mitchell, who
resigned as Attorney General
to become head of the re-elec-
tion committee. Mr. Ehrlich-
man's testimony was damaging
to Mr. Mitchell on the ques-
tion of whether he approved
the bugging. Mr. Haldeman's
deposition tended to support
the former Attorney General's
denial.

In cautious phrases, often in-
terrupted by claims of execu-
tive privilege, Mr. Haldeman
pictured the President, Mr.
Ehrlichman and himself as hav-
ing been kept in the dark
about Watergate by Mr. Dean.
He said that up until last

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March 22, Mr. Dean stoutly
maintained there had been no
White House involvement.

Mr. Haldeman said he had
learned secondhand, through
Mr. Mitchell, that Mr. Mag-
ruder knew and approved of
the plans for electronic surveil-
lance of the Democratic head-
quarters at the Watergate.

Mr. Ehrlichman, in a deposi-
tion made public two days ago
in the same case, said that
information he had gathered on
the Watergate affair indicated
that Mr. Mitchell personally
chose three sites for electronic
bugging and that three meet-
ings on the subject were held.
The first two plans were re-
jected and the third accepted,
he said.

The deposition by Mr. Halde-
man mentions only two meet-
ings at Mr. Mitchell's office—
meetings at which bugging
plans were reportedly rejected.

Maurice R. Dunie, an attor-
ney for the Democratic National
Committee, asked Mr. Halde-
man if he knew of the meetings
at the time they were going
on. Mr. Haldeman replied that
Mr. Dean later claimed to have
told him about the meetings
and answered:

"I don't have a recollection
of his giving me that report to
my clear and present recollec-
tion; but I have no reason to
question his statement that he
did. I think I am willing to ac-
cept that as a possibility."

Concern by Nixon Cited

Mr. Haldeman recounted at
some length Mr. Nixon's con-
cerns about the Watergate
affair.

"From the time of the Water-
gate break-in to the election,
really, there were periodic new
developments with regard to
Watergate that would appear
in the press or that would come
forth as part of the investiga-
tion or the various actions that
were being taken by the prose-
cutors, court and so on," Mr.
Haldeman said.

"Whenever there was such a
development there was a con-
cern expressed on the Presi-
dent's part, usually to me, that
we try to get the facts in this
matter determined and made
known.

"There was natural concern

on his part, being at that time up for re-election... that the insinuations and appearances and allegations that were arising would be detrimental to that campaign effort and that here was a desire that facts be known, cleared up and established in the public mind as well as legally so that those doubts would not persist."

Concern After Election

Mr. Haldeman said he had asked Mr. Dean repeatedly, "Can't we get the full story out?"

He said Mr. Dean replied that the full story was not available because of a lack of knowledge, conflicting statements, legal rights of defendants and "the questions of the ongoing legal [criminal] process as contrasted to the ongoing political process."

In the postelection period, from Nov. 7 to the end of the year, "there was a new concern on the President's part" that "any questions pending on the Watergate" be "cleared up," Mr. Haldeman said.

He said the President wanted it cleared up "for the effect on the start of the new term and the desire that before the Congress returned and before the President was inaugurated that the whole matter be cleared up and made known so that it wouldn't be hanging over into the second term."

Mr. Haldeman often used the subjunctive case to guard his statements about the President. He said, for example, that

Mr. Nixon "would have raised again questions as to why this couldn't now be cleared up."

"Basically the answers [from Mr. Dean] continue to be the same."

He said Mr. Dean stuck to his story that there was no White House involvement, with slight modification, as late as March 22.

Mr. Haldeman said it was a lack of information and "lack of delivery on the assignment that he [the President] had given Dean" that caused Mr. Nixon to ask for Mr. Ehrlichman's investigation.

"As of the 22d [of March] he was expecting in a few days this full development [report] from Dean which never materialized and things were moving on and he wasn't getting the results he had sought and I

think he, at this point, made a shift in assignment and took Dean, in his own mind at least, off the assignment and put Ehrlichman on it with the idea of busting through because he wasn't getting through from Dean," Mr. Haldeman said.

Own Role Described

Mr. Haldeman pictured his own role as a "conduit" for information to the President. He said he was the President's "basic contact with the re-election campaign in general," but added "I would not say that I functioned as a continuing liaison with the committee."

He did not explain the difference.

He said that on March 28 he met with Mr. Mitchell in Mr. Haldeman's White House office.

He said Mr. Mitchell told him that Mr. Magruder had felt pressure from the White House to get on with the gathering of intelligence on the Democrats and that the pressure had come from Charles W. Colson, special counsel to the President.

As a response to this pressure, according to Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Mitchell said Mr. Magruder said "he had launched a Liddy intelligence program which included the D.N.C. [Democratic National Committee] project."

The "Liddy" reference is to G. Gordon Liddy, convicted director of the Watergate burglary team.

Colson Statement Noted

"Magruder's outline as of that time, as expressed to Mitchell the day before and as reported by Mitchell to me, was that the Watergate project, the entry and bugging of the D.N.C., had been conducted with Magruder's knowledge and approval," Mr. Haldeman said.

He said he talked to Mr. Colson about it later and was told that Liddy and E. Howard Hunt Jr., who pleaded guilty in the Watergate burglary, had come to Mr. Colson's office because they were unable to get anyone to listen to their intelligence gathering plans. Mr. Haldeman said that Mr. Colson had told him that when the two men came to his office, he felt rushed at the end of a long day and did not believe their request involved anything illegal.

"He picked up the phone and

called Magruder while Hunt and Liddy were still present and talked to Magruder and said these guys tell me they have got an intelligence program set up that nobody over there will listen to. At least listen to it and see if you don't want to consider it. If it's not to be used, fine; but it ought to be at least considered. That was the extent of his conversation."

Funds Discussed

Mr. Haldeman, in discussing a \$350,000 cash fund that he controlled, said he thought the money was picked up at the re-election committee in early April. He said the matter was handled by his assistant, Gordon C. Strachan, though Mr. Strachan did not handle the cash personally.

But Mr. Haldeman was vague as to whether it was held in a bank and declined for the most part to say what it had been spent on, except for \$22,000 that went for advertising.

"I must admit," said Mr. Dunie, the Democrat's attorney, "I am acutely curious about \$350,000 in currency, if I understand your testimony correctly, being picked up by some individual whose name you do not know. Do you know the name today?"

"No I do not," Mr. Haldeman replied, adding that the name was known to the Watergate grand jury.

"Do you know the name of the bank today?" Mr. Dunie asked.