

What the Senate Hearings Hope

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WASHINGTON — The Senate Watergate hearings will seek to show that White House officials, under a national security label, set up a private, secret police unit that evolved into a political espionage apparatus.

Public hearings open Thursday.

The operation began about the time of the Pentagon Papers disclosures in 1971; broadened into a network for the infiltration and attempted disruption of the Democratic Party's nominating process; collapsed in the arrests of five spies in the Democratic headquarters June 17; and sought concealment behind a high-level cover-up effort that reached from the White House into the Justice Department, the sources said.

All Stages

The Senate Watergate Committee intends to question men involved in all stages of the operation — including some of those who have refused to discuss their roles in public — in hearings expected to be carried, at least in part, on live television.

But under a harmonious surface of cooperation, the committee and government lawyers are described as "on a collision course" over the hearings and the granting of immunity to key witnesses such as former White House Counsel John W. Dean IH and former Nixon campaign official Jeb S. Magruder.

Both, investigators have said, are able to implicate others in the Watergate espionage scheme and in cover-up efforts.

Attorneys Doubtful

While the Senate committee has indicated it will recommend immunity for Dean, Magruder and others for anything they might say at the hearings, the U.S. attorneys are described as fearful the immunity will endanger possible criminal prosecution of Watergate figures.

"Granted it's only a limited immunity," said an official, "but it can complicate making a case when you have to be able to prove you are not prosecuting on the basis of testimony given to the committee under immunity."

But a congressional source observed, "I think the committee wants to be sure that the story is told and that remedies can be considered. I don't think the prosecutors did much of a job with the previous trial. I would guess it would be to the administration's advantage if Dean or Magruder wouldn't testify, if they pleaded the Fifth Amendment, like the Cubans and (E. Howard) Hunt did at the trial."

A number of sources have indicated the prosecutors feel they can have Dean indicted and convicted for a number of charges, and may not need his testimony — or grant him immunity — in order to indict others. Among those facing the possibility of indictment are Dean's former White House superiors, H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman.

Secret Police

The investigators have found that the secret police unit was established in the White House with the hiring of ex-FBI Agent G. Gordon Liddy and former CIA Agent E. Howard Hunt.

Hunt was an old friend of then presidential trouble-shooter Charles Colson. They were hired by White House aide Dwight Chapin. When President Nixon became upset about disclosures of the Pentagon Papers he ordered his adviser Ehrlichman to conduct an investigation. Ehrlichman assigned two of his lieutenants, Egil (Bud) Krogh and David Young to the job.

to Reveal

They turned Liddy and Hunt loose.

"I think the White House must have known what it was getting in Hunt and Liddy," said an official. "Liddy had a reputation in the FBI and in the Treasury Department as a kook, a cowboy, ready for anything. He tried to get a job as head of one of the anti-organized crime task forces, and the Justice

Department wouldn't hire him. . . . Hunt had a right-wing reputation at the CIA. He was not one of the favorite people over there for years. I know one ambassador who refused to have him assigned to his embassy. He raised hell, wouldn't have him. He knew Hunt from a previous station."

Bobbsey Twins

"They were naturals for this kind of clandestine as-

signment, Bobbsey Twins of the James Bond school but with experience and commitment," said an official.

It was Haldeman, investigators believe, who proposed the establishment of a political sabotage unit aimed at disrupting the Democratic primary and nominating process in order to assure that Nixon faced a relatively weak opponent in November, 1972.

Hunt, while involved in the

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"plumbers" group trying to trace leaks of the Pentagon Papers, was also trying to recruit former colleagues for the political intelligence operation and doing research on possible Democratic candidates. His research appeared to concentrate on Sen. Edward M. Kennedy.

In these political duties, a committee source said, Hunt worked under the supervision of his friend, Colson.

Meanwhile, President Nixon's personal attorney, Herbert W. Kalmbach, was raising campaign funds and some of the cash was set aside for political espionage activities, investigators said.

Asked Payments

According to the FBI, Nixon's appointments secretary and a Haldeman lieutenant at the time, Dwight Chapin, asked Kalmbach to make payments to Donald H. Se-

gretti, a former college roommate. Segretti had joined the espionage operation as an agent provocateur.

In the months ahead, the government reports said, Segretti went about the business of trying to recruit a loose intelligence operation of about a dozen spies and disrupters.

Liddy and Hunt, the White House "Mission Impossible" team, were, along with many other White House

personnel, transferred to the Committee to Re-elect the President in January, 1972.

They were also recruiting personnel for their intelligence ring.

At a Florida meeting early in 1972, Hunt and Liddy took over direct command of the Segretti operation. Previously it had been under the general supervision of Chapin and Gordon Strachan who both reported to Haldeman, according to committee sources.