

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, JULY 31, 1973 —

Higher newsstand price in air delivery cities

M

15 CENTS

**HALDEMAN SWEARS HE AND NIXON
HAD NO WATBERGATE KNOWLEDGE;
HEARD TAPES PLAYED RECENTLY**

DEAN IS ACCUSED

Former Counsel Said to Have Misled the President and Aide

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 30—H. R. Haldeman declared today that he and President Nixon were innocent of any involvement in the Watergate break-in or cover-up, but that they had been "badly misled" by John W. Dean 3d and others.

"I have full confidence that when the entire truth is known, it will be clear to the American

Excerpts from the testimony by Haldeman, Page 24.

people that President Nixon had no knowledge of or involvement in either the Watergate affair itself or the subsequent efforts of a 'cover-up' of the Watergate," Mr. Haldeman said in a long opening statement. "It will be equally clear, despite all the unfounded allegations to the contrary, that I had no such knowledge or involvement.

Mr. Haldeman, the former White House chief of staff, told the Senate Watergate committee this afternoon that he had listened earlier this month to the secret tape recordings of two of the President's meetings with Mr. Dean, the deposed White House counsel.

'Did Not Keep Us Posted'

On the basis of the recordings and his own knowledge, Mr. Haldeman insisted, the facts were clear that Mr. Dean "apparently did not keep us fully posted and, it now appears, he did not keep us accurately posted," on the Watergate case.

He said that the tape recording of the meeting between Mr. Dean and the President last March 21 was totally at variance with Mr. Dean's account of the meeting to the Senators.

Mr. Haldeman said that the President had not, as Mr. Dean alleged, volunteered the information that he had guaranteed executive clemency to Watergate case defendants, nor did the President give any indication that he was aware of payments to silence the conspirators.

On the contrary, Mr. Haldeman said, "Dean mentioned several times during this meeting his awareness that he was telling the President things the President had not known about."

Hypothetical Discussion

Meanwhile, Gerald L. Warren, the White House deputy press secretary, all but rejected proposals for a compromise in the struggle over access to the Presidential tape recordings dealing with Watergate. The President has refused to comply with subpoenas from the Senate Watergate Committee and his special prosecutor directing him to turn over the tapes.

Mr. Haldeman insisted that the tapes bore out his conclusion that Mr. Nixon had merely "led me on" in a "hypothetical discussion" of demands being made by E. Howard Hunt Jr. and other Watergate conspirators for more money and a guarantee of clemency.

"The President was exploring and probing," Mr. Haldeman said. "He was trying to find out what in the world was going on."

He said that the events Mr. Dean had described as having taken place at a March 13

Continued on Page 22, Column 3

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

meeting with the President actually figured into the March 21 discussion and that he was therefore forced to "surmise that there is a genuine confusion in Mr. Dean's mind" about the meetings.

The witness testified that Mr. Dean had agreed with the President's statement "that he could not offer clemency" and that Mr. Nixon had said "it would be wrong" to raise money to keep the conspirators silent.

But Mr. Haldeman's revelation that he had listened to some of the secret recordings generated an immediate confrontation between the witness and the Senate investigating committee.

President Nixon, refusing last week to turn over the recordings, asserted that they had been in his "sole" custody. White House spokesmen added that no one other than Mr. Nixon had ever listened to the tapes.

Mr. Haldeman disclosed this afternoon, as he began his appearance at the televised Watergate hearings, that President Nixon asked him to listen to the recordings of meetings with Mr. Dean last Sept. 15 and on March 21 of this year.

The witness added that he took the tapes of the latter meeting to his home in July to play them back in solitude.

'You Took Them Home?'

"You took them home?" Senator Joseph M. Montoya, Democrat of New Mexico, asked incredulously.

"Over night," Mr. Haldeman replied.

Both Mr. Haldeman and his lawyer, John J. Wilson, said that the President had ordered that Mr. Haldeman refuse, on the grounds that the tapes were privileged, to discuss anything contained on them that Mr. Haldeman had not heard himself when the recordings were made.

But the committee, after a hurried conference, refused to accept the injunction and or-

dered Mr. Haldeman—who appeared willing himself to go into the subject—to discuss the recorded conversations he had heard.

Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. of North Carolina, the Democratic chairman of the committee, asserted that if Mr. Haldeman had been authorized to hear the tapes he must also testify as to their contents. The Republican vice chairman, Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee, concurred.

Reads From 'Addendum'

Mr. Haldeman then read to the committee from an "addendum," which he had prepared in advance, outlining his recollections of the tape-recorded version of the March 21 meeting.

The tape recordings—which have become a central issue between the President and the Senate panel and the subject of a legal confrontation over the Constitution's doctrine of separation of powers—apparently are central to any final determination of facts in the Watergate case.

Mr. Dean told the Senators last month that he had become convinced, through conversations with the President dating back to Sept. 15, that Mr. Nixon had been personally enmeshed in the Watergate cover-up.

Mr. Haldeman was present at the Sept. 15 meeting and at the first part of the March 21 meeting at which Mr. Dean said he had warned the President that the cover-up was coming unraveled and that Watergate was becoming "a cancer growing on the Presidency."

Denounces Dean Version

But Mr. Haldeman joined his former colleague in the upper echelon of the White House staff, John D. Ehrlichman, in denouncing Mr. Dean's version of the President's role in the Watergate case.

He said that at the Sept. 15 meeting Mr. Nixon had not congratulated Mr. Dean for his efforts to "contain" the Watergate case—as Mr. Dean had stated it—to the seven original defendants.

All that the President did, Mr. Haldeman said, was to "commend Dean for his handling of the Watergate matter, which was a perfectly natural thing for him to do" after three months of attempts by Mr. Dean to "investigate" the case for the White House.

Mr. Dean charged last month cussed last September the prospects for blocking a Congressional inquiry into Watergate, for delaying action on a Watergate civil suit filed by

the Democratic National Committee and for prompting officials of the Internal Revenue Service to harass political opponents of the Nixon Administration.

Mr. Haldeman, however, insisted, as he calmly read his long statement this afternoon, that Mr. Dean had misunderstood the President or perhaps misled the Senate committee in recounting the discussion.

Discussion of Hearings

According to Mr. Haldeman's gaged in a "lengthy" but appropriate discussion of hearings being considered by the House Banking and Currency Committee last fall. He said that Mr. Dean had, in fact, "assured the President" that there was nothing likely to arise from the hearings that would "surprise us."

Similarly, Mr. Haldeman contended, the only discussion of the Democrats' civil suit was about "Mr. Dean's hopes of slowing down the suit" and about the possibility that Roemer McPhee, an attorney for the Republican party, might keep the White House "abreast of what was happening" in the civil suit.

Mr. Haldeman did not expalin, but appeared to minimize, the discussions of the Internal Revenue Service. He said that the President and Mr. Dean had talked about "reluctance of I.R.S. to follow up on complaints of possible violations against people who were supporting opponents."

Mr. Haldeman, whose crew-cut hair stood stock straight as he bent over the witness table in the Senate Caucus Room to read his opening remarks, continually depicted Mr. Dean as the central figure in the cover-up.

He said that the President had deliberately established a White House staff system that delegated maximum responsibility to subordinates, that Mr. Dean was the President's chief source of Watergate information and that Watergate was "a matter which arose only occasionally and only briefly" from June 17, 1972—the date of the bungled burglary at the offices of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate complex here—to March of this year.

Mr. Dean constantly assured the President and senior White House aides that no one in the Executive Mansion was involved in the planning or execution of the break-in, the former chief of staff said.

But he added that Mr. Dean had persistently failed to adhere to the President's orders to produce a written report in which

the facts about the conspiracy would be made public.

As it turned out, Mr. Haldeman said, "We were badly misled" by high officials of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President and by "one of our own men"—Mr. Dean.

The witness said that Mr. Dean told him last summer that John N. Mitchell, the former Attorney General and one-time director of the President's re-election campaign, wanted funds to be provided to the Watergate defendants for attorneys' fees and family support.

"It would appear," he said, "that, at the White House at least, John Dean was the only one who knew that the funds were for 'hush money' if, in fact, that is what they were for."

He said that neither he nor Mr. Nixon was aware until four months ago of the allegations that the campaign committee had provided some \$450,000 to silence the conspirators.

Although Mr. Haldeman spent most of his late-afternoon appearance before the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activity seeking to refute Mr. Dean's charges of high-level White House cover-up efforts, he also discussed some of the allegations made against him.

He confirmed that \$350,000 in cash left over from Mr. Nixon's 1968 Presidential campaign had been kept under his control in a lock box outside the White House. But he said that the funds had been disbursed only according to Mr. Dean's instructions and that if the money eventually was used to silence the conspirators it was without his knowledge.

Mr. Haldeman also confirmed that a large sum—other witnesses have put the total at \$400,000—was funneled in 1970 to Gov. Albert Brewer of Alabama in an unsuccessful effort to prevent George C. Wallace from winning the governorship and using it as a base for a third-party Presidential campaign last year.

Furthermore, Mr. Haldeman acknowledged that he approved the hiring last year of Donald H. Segretti to conduct a campaign of "pranks" against Democratic contenders for the White House.