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Talks With Dean Admitted by Nixon

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The White House confirmed yesterday that President Nixon had met several times this spring with his since-deposed counsel John W. Dean III to discuss the President's Watergate investigation and other matters.

However, deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren said that it would be "constitutionally inappropriate" to make logs showing the dates of these conversations available to the public, the Senate investigating committee or the grand jury.

The Washington Post reported Sunday that Dean had told Senate investigators and federal prosecutors that he had discussed aspects of the Watergate cover-up with Mr. Nixon or in the President's presence at least 35 times between January and April of this year.

At the time of the story Warren issued a White House denial describing the account and a similar story in The New York Times as being "part of a careful, coordinated strategy ... to prosecute a case against the President in the press using innuendo, distortion of fact and outright falsehood." Warren said the objective of this strategy was to "destroy the President."

Yesterday, Warren was asked whether the President had seen Dean more frequently this year than in previous years.

"Obviously, there were topics of interest within the White House during this year which would have involved the office of the counsel," Warren replied.

He listed these topics as including "a major statement on executive privilege" and discussions of

See PRESIDENT, A6, Col. 6

PRESIDENT, From A1

Senate confirmation hearings of L. Patrick Gray as director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which ended with Gray's resignation as acting director.

"And there were discussions of the President's own investigation of the Watergate, which he described to you," Warren added.

Warren consistently refused to "get into the numbers game" and say how many times the President and Dean had met together. He was asked whether the logs — a timed record of the President's meetings and phone calls — would refute Dean's allegation.

"I am not going to get into the business of discussing what may become evidence from this podium," Warren said.

He was then asked how the logs could become evidence in view of the White House position that they will not be made available to the grand jury.

"This is not the proper forum to discuss allegations concerning potential evidence," Warren said.

In response, special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox told reporters later that he intended to have access to all papers.

"I have stated before and I would be glad to say it again that I have been assured of access to all papers," Cox said in answer to inquiries about the White House refusal to make the logs available. "I intend to have access to all papers, and if there is any waffling

on it, I intend to make the waffling plain."

Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson said yesterday afternoon that if a conflict arises between Cox and the White House on the issue of the logs, "it may have to be eventually adjudicated by a court." In that event, Richardson added, the President would have to be represented by his own counsel, since Cox is part of the Justice Department.

Conceivably, the logs also could become available if subpoenaed in any court case arising from the Watergate burglary.

Last week, White House officials used the "constitutionally inappropriate" phrase in saying why President Nixon would refuse to appear personally before the grand jury. Asked to explain his use of the phrase yesterday as a reason for withholding the logs, Warren said: "It would violate the basic doctrine of separation of powers."

In the briefing yesterday Warren was also asked whether the President had met with his former chief of staff, H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, or with his former domestic affairs adviser, John D. Ehrlichman, since he accepted their resignations on April 30.

"Not to my knowledge," Warren replied.

He said that Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Dean all had "access to the files they worked on" and were able to come into an office in the Executive Office Building and use these files.

The procedure, as explained by an administra-

tion official, is that any of the three former aides can go to a room in the Executive Office Building and ask to see the files, which are under security protection by the Secret Service.

They are then given the file they request and allowed to inspect it but are not allowed to make copies or remove it from the premises, the official said.

The reports that Dean has told investigators that the President knew of the Watergate cover-up plan has increased pressure on Mr. Nixon to make a further statement.

White House officials have been hinting for several days that the President would soon hold a press conference and that he would discuss Watergate issues. But Warren said yesterday that no date for a press conference had been set and he referred to Mr. Nixon's written statement of May 22 as a "complete statement" on the issue.

The White House also announced that press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler is leaving this morning with national security adviser Henry A. Kissinger to attend Paris negotiations with chief North Vietnamese negotiator Le Duc Tho about cease-fire violations. It is considered unlikely that Mr. Nixon would hold a press conference while Ziegler is away.

The statement issued by the White House said that Ziegler was making the trip "to increase his understanding of this particular series of negotiations on enforcing the agreement."