

Haldeman Told of Spying, Aide Says

Washington

A former aide to H. R. Haldeman testified yesterday that the ex-White House chief of staff was informed more than two months before the Watergate break-in that President Nixon's re-election committee had set up "a sophisticated political intelligence-gathering system."

Gordon C. Strachan, who served as the liaison between the White House and the Committee for the Re-election of the President, told the Senate Watergate committee that two or three days after the break-in, he destroyed a memorandum informing Haldeman of the intelligence system.

Strachan also said that "after speaking to" Haldeman, he destroyed a sample intelligence report and "several other documents" that he feared might link the burglars to the White House.

Strachan read a 15-page prepared statement before the committee adjourned until Monday, when he will return.

TAPES

The investigating committee seemed bent on preparing for an apparent showdown with the President next week over White House reluctance to turn over to the Senators secret tapes of Mr. Nixon's conversations with key figures in the Watergate case.

The committee scheduled a closed meeting at 9 a.m. Monday to receive the President's formal reply, amid strong intimations from current White House aides that Mr. Nixon would refuse to budge from his position that the constitutional separation of powers would not permit Senate access to the tapes or to White House documents.

Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee, the senior Republican on the committee, said that he "won't believe" reports of the President's apparent decision "until I hear it from the

President."

But other officials of the committee said that they expect the committee to vote Monday to subpoena the tapes and documents, and thus launch a major legal battle with the White House.

Strachan was the first wit-

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ness before the committee in a position to confirm allegations made last month by John W. Dean III, the dismissed White House legal counsel, that the President and his senior assistants — Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman — were participants in the coverup.

In his brief appearance yesterday afternoon, Strachan, acknowledged that he had been the courier who transmitted \$350,000 of White House "polling" funds to others who used part of the cash to pay off the seven original Watergate case defendants.

But he denied having been aware of the intended use of the money.

Even though he appeared before the panel under a grant of partial immunity from prosecution, Strachan seemed reluctant to volunteer the specifics of what he described as his close association "during my employment at the White House with individuals who have confessed to criminal wrongdoing."

MAGRUDER

Strachan disputed the account of Jeb Stuart Magruder, deputy director of the re-election committee, that he had been kept informed routinely of the three meetings in early 1972 at which the cost of the intelligence-gathering scheme of G. Gordon Liddy, a convicted Watergate conspirator, was pared from \$1 million to \$250,000 and the plan reluctantly approved by former Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

Strachan said he had told the senators where to find "documentary proof" that

Dean was responsible for keeping Haldeman abreast of campaign intelligence matters.

Nonetheless, asserting that he wanted to "supply some missing links" in the chain of evidence presented by earlier witnesses, Strachan described how he had advised his superior, Haldeman, when Magruder told him that an intelligence plan had been approved early in April of last year.

PHONE

In a "rather short" telephone conversation, Strachan said, Magruder gave him a brief description of about 30 "major campaign decisions" that had been made at a March 30 meeting with Mitchell, then the campaign director, and Frederic C. LaRue, a campaign aide.

"He told me, and I am repeating his words rather precisely," said Strachan, "A sophisticated political intelligence-gathering system has been approved with a budget of 300 (\$300,000). Unfortunately, he neither gave me nor did I ask for any further details about the subject."

MEMO

Strachan said he subsequently included the information in one of the periodic "political matters" memoranda he wrote to Haldeman.

He said that this particular memo was eight or ten pages long, with more than a dozen attachments, but that it contained only a single, three-line paragraph that related the information about the intelligence plan.

Strachan said he had included, as attachment "H" to the memo, one of three political intelligence reports he had received from the campaign committee.

He said the report had been titled "Sedan Chair 2" — which other witnesses have testified was the code name of a double agent in the presidential primary campaign of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (Dem-Minn.).

The intelligence report, Strachan said, began with words like "a confidential source reveals."

Strachan testified under oath that he "certainly began to wonder" after the June 17, 1972, burglary at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate "who else but" officials of the Presi-



UPI Telephoto

GORDON STRACHAN
He says he told his boss

dent's campaign could have been involved.

Despite Strachan's professed desire to "supply some missing links," his prepared statement left a number of gaps to be filled in by responses to questions.

Strachan offered no explanation for the discrepancy in the amount of the intelligence-gathering budget — every other witness has set it at \$250,000 rather than the \$300,000. Strachan recalled — and he omitted the names of those who had involved him, however peripherally, in the coverup.

"My intention to corroborate specific matters and to refute others does not stem from a desire to testify for or against anyone — nor from a desire to feign excessive remorse — but solely because I am here to tell the truth," the 29-year-old witness said.

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