

Dean Recounts White House Anxieties

by David S. Broder

In his Senate testimony yesterday, former presidential counsel John W. Dean III drew a picture of a pre-election White House neurotically concerned with the presence of anti-Nixon demonstrators and morbidly fascinated with gossip and intelligence about the Democratic opposition.

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One former campaign aide said Dean's testimony yesterday "rang very true. We all learned that what pleased them most was a tidbit they could pass on to Haldeman. That would get you rewards. Every one of us felt the need to supply that kind of information."

He recalled that as far back as Mr. Nixon's 1962 campaign for Governor of California, Haldeman, who was then the campaign manager, and others "were so desperately afraid of letting Nixon see any hostile demonstrators that we had to organize groups of kids to lock arms and keep them away."

A second man, a former White House official, said, "It all goes back to his (Mr. Nixon's) problem with having the unexpected happen. It's part and parcel of that. His staff learns to go to any length to protect him from something for which he is not prepared."

A third man, now also retired from the White House, said, "I never got the feeling that Nixon himself or the top staff guys - the ones at the 7:30 meeting - were that upset with the demonstrators.

"But I always had the feeling that the reaction accelerated as it went down the chain of command, and frequently by the time it hit the third or fourth guy, it was completely out of control. There was a lot of it with the guys who worked for Haldeman, Colson, Chapin and the deep-down underlings of (John) Ehrlichman - Boy Scout stuff."