

Mitchell Relaxes in New Office Only 50 Paces From His Old

Ex-Nixon Aide Says Raid on Democrats Did Not Figure in His Decision to Resign

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WASHINGTON, July 7 — For the first time in months, John N. Mitchell seemed at ease with himself and his surroundings.

"I'm putting the lid on my activities here," he said, "and I hope I've got the lid on at home" — an affectionate reference to his wife, Martha, whose public demands that he leave politics persuaded him to resign one week ago from his post as director of the Nixon re-election campaign.

His new office in the law firm of Mudge, Rose, Guthrie Alexander is less than 50 paces from the office where he ran the campaign, but the difference in atmosphere could be measured in light years.

There were no callers waiting to see him outside, and the telephone remained still. It seemed a perfect setting for a man who intends to put in a normal 9-to-5 workday "advising" the Nixon campaign staff and practicing some law while staying as far as he can from the operational details that kept him going 18 hours a day, seven days a week and finally drove his wife to issue her public ultimatum.

'No Other Choice'

"There was really no other choice," he said yesterday in a leisurely interview that covered issues ranging from the problems confronting his successor, Clark, McGregor, to the bugging of the Democratic National Committee, to the prospects of a McGovern candidacy.

"My bride was tired of traveling, tired of making speeches, nervous about flying, and I wasn't around much to help. It was as simple as that." The clear implication was that Mrs. Mitchell, regarded by Mr. Nixon's campaign strategists as a major drawing card at fundraisers and other gatherings, would be doing little or no campaigning.

Mr. Mitchell insisted, in answer to a question, that the five-man raid on the headquarters of the Democratic



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National Committee June 17 had nothing to do with his wife's complaint that politics was a "dirty" business or his own decision to leave it.

"On the contrary," he said. "If my own investigation had turned up a link between this committee or the White House and the raid, I would have been less inclined to leave. I would have wanted to stick around and clear it up."

Baffled by Motives

He said that his own inquiries "have not produced much more than the private agencies or the newspapers have," and that he remains baffled by the motives behind the raid. But he said that he had satisfied himself that no one in authority in the Repub-

lican apparatus had anything to do with it.

On the Vice-Presidency, Mr. Mitchell said he thought Mr. Nixon was wise to "keep his options open until the convention," but that personally he saw no real alternative to Vice President Agnew.

He said he expected John B. Connally, former Secretary of the Treasury, to make a substantial contribution to the campaign, and noted with obvious satisfaction, "There is no shortage of Democrats prepared to help us in the event McGovern wins the nomination." He also said that he expected Mr. Nixon to make substantial inroads among normally Democratic Jewish and Roman Catholic voters, as well as workingmen "who have moved in to the \$14,000-\$15,000 a year bracket."

Turning to the campaign, Mr. Mitchell said that his most difficult problem had been to convince party leaders in the states to begin precinct-by-precinct work—including registration—early in the game rather than waiting until fall. Preventing overconfidence in the party, he suggested, would be one of Mr. MacGregor's major tasks.

Another task confronting his successor, he said, is to establish a clearly defined relationship with the President that would give him ready access to the Oval Office and freedom from interference by the White House staff.

Early this year, when he left the post of Attorney General, Mr. Mitchell worked out a private understanding with the President under which H. R. Haldeman, Mr. Nixon's most powerful senior assistant, would screen political suggestions from the White House staff and report directly to Mr. Mitchell at the committee. Under this system, final decisions on strategy and issues were to be made either at the committee or by the Nixon-Mitchell-Haldeman triumvirate.

"The campaign," Mr. Mitchell said, "has to be run from here." He expressed confidence that Mr. MacGregor would be given similar authority.