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Colson on Moscow mission for Nixon on eve of quitting

By William J. Eaton
Of Our Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Charles W. Colson, the controversial White House counsel, is going on a mission to Moscow, Bucharest and Vienna for President Nixon on the eve of his resignation.

The 39-year-old Colson, accompanied by his wife, leaves Wednesday on the two-week journey to discuss expansion of facilities for American businessmen in the Soviet Union and Romania.

As he prepared to depart, the White House refused to discuss a report that he dispatched E. Howard Hunt, a former U.S. spy who pleaded guilty to wiretapping in the Watergate case, to interview Dita Beard, former lobbyist for International Telephone and Telegraph, early in 1972.

A MEMO attributed to Mrs. Beard — and at least partially disowned by her — touched off a Senate investigation into charges that ITT contributed \$400,000 to help finance the Republican convention in return for a favorable antitrust settlement.

Presidential Press Sec. Ronald L. Ziegler was asked about a newspaper story charging that Colson sent Hunt, a former White House consultant, to talk to Mrs. Beard in Denver. She

flew to Denver after columnist Jack Anderson printed a copy of the memo Anderson said she wrote.

"This is not the place to address that question," Ziegler said at his briefing Tuesday.

"Where is that place," a reporter asked.

"Any other questions?" Ziegler responded.

HE SAID HUNT had been "in court" recently and any answer might affect an appeal. Another reporter noted that Hunt had pleaded guilty to all the charges against him and no appeal was possible.

Colson, who was frequently referred to as the White House "hatchet man" during the 1972 campaign, will stop in London, Leningrad, Moscow, Bucharest and Vienna, where he will dedicate an East-West trade center on behalf of the President.

Colson has acknowledged that he hired Hunt, an old friend, to advise the White House on narcotics intelligence and declassification of the Pentagon Papers in July, 1971.

COLSON HAS said he had no advance knowledge of the Watergate break-in or wiretapping. He did acknowledge in a deposition that White House aide John Ehrlichman telephone him the morning that five men were arrested inside the Democratic offices at the



Charles W. Colson
"Hatchet man"

Watergate building to inquire as to Hunt's whereabouts.

At one point under vigorous questioning, Ziegler said, "I don't know" if the ITT case has anything to do with the Watergate trial.

He disputed a reporter's characterization of Colson's foreign trip as a "junket" and said the White House aide would pay for his wife's transportation expenses.

ALTHOUGH Colson's resignation is to take effect March 1, he will be in Vienna that day. He plans to join a Washington law firm.

One of the firm's new clients is the Teamsters' Union, an organization that Colson dealt with often in his duties as liaison to private organizations for the White House.

Sylvia Porter
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