

Panel Finds 'No Evidence' That Implicates Haldeman

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WASHINGTON, April 4 —

The Senate committee investigating the Watergate conspiracy said today that it had "no evidence of any nature" implicating H. R. Haldeman, the White House chief of staff, in any "illegal" activities.

The panel's chairman, Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, and its vice chairman, Senator Howard H. Baker Jr., Republican of Tennessee, said that they were making the announcement "in the interests of fairness and justice."

There have been newspaper reports that James W. McCord Jr., in secret testimony before the committee last week, charged Mr. Haldeman with advance knowledge of the wiretapping at the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee last year. McCord has been convicted in the burglary and bugging.

In addition, Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr., a Connecticut Republican who is a member of the investigating committee, said yesterday that Mr. Haldeman should accept over-

all responsibility for improper Republican political activity and should submit his resignation.

The statement today by Senators Ervin and Baker said that the committee was "concerned with certain news media accounts" inferring that Mr. Haldeman was involved in the bugging and in "other illegal acts" in the 1972 Presidential campaign. The statement added:

"In the interests of fairness and justice, the committee wishes to state publicly that as of this time it has received no evidence of any nature linking Mr. Haldeman with any illegal acts in connection with the Presidential campaign of 1972."

McCord, who was security coordinator for the Committee for the Re-election of the President at the time of the plot and was convicted in January, went before the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities a week ago.

The Times reported last week that McCord, in the closed ses-

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sion, quoted other conspirators as telling him that Mr. Haldeman "knew what was going on" at the President's political organization. It was noted that he had not elaborated on the statement.

There were reports, based on variations of this remark, that quoted sources as interpreting McCord's testimony to mean that the powerful assistant to President Nixon had been aware of the planning of the Watergate bugging.

The New York Times noted on Sunday, however, that some of those at the hearing had said that, in the context of the questioning, which was not pursued by the Senators, McCord's statement could not be said to have implicated Mr. Haldeman.

Senator Weicker, who has said he had no evidence of specific acts of wrongdoing by the White House official, issued a statement through his staff today saying that he concurred in the Ervin-Baker announcement.

2 Go Before Grand Jury

In another development today, four of McCord's co-conspirators were taken from the District of Columbia jail



Fred J. Maroon

H. R. Haldeman

and granted immunity from further prosecution by Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the United States District Court here. All had pleaded guilty at the trial.

Two of the men, Bernard L. Barker and Eugenio R. Martinez, appeared today before a

Federal grand jury that has resumed its investigation of the Watergate plot. The two others, Frank A. Sturgis and Virgilio R. Gonzalez, are scheduled to testify tomorrow.

The attorney for all four Miami men, Daniel Schultz of Washington, told reporters that Barker and Martinez answered all questions posed by the 23-member panel after Judge Sirica's grant of immunity.

There was no indication of what the two men had said in the secret proceeding. A fifth conspirator who pleaded guilty, E. Howard Hunt Jr., answered grand jury questions under an immunity grant last week.

Further Appearances Set

G. Gordon Liddy, the seventh conspirator, who was found guilty in January, refused to talk despite Judge Sirica's order to do so and was found in contempt of court yesterday. Liddy has appealed his conviction.

McCord, in addition to further testimony before the Senate committee at an unspecified future date and an appearance in civil litigation related to the Watergate affair, is also scheduled to go before the grand jury after Sturgis and Gonzalez are dismissed.

Also today, Senator Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York, said it would be "constructive" for President Nixon to inform the public directly of what he knew about the espionage plot. "If the President has made the investigation which he says he has," Mr. Javits said, "I think he should share with the public the details of what he found out. I don't think he should kiss it off with a blanket statement that 'everything's O.K.'"

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