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Nixon Is Reported to Have Phoned Dean To Tell Him, 'You're Still My Counsel'

Lawyer Termed Pleased by Easter Message

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH
 Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 23 — President Nixon telephoned his personal reassurances to his embattled aide, John W. Dean 3d, yesterday, wishing him a "happy Easter" and telling him "You're still my counsel," a source close to Mr. Dean said today.

Mr. Nixon, described as being cheerful during the call from Key Biscayne, Fla., discussed a number of White House legal matters not connected with the Watergate inquiry, the source said.

Gerald L. Warren, the deputy White House press secretary, said in Florida that he had no knowledge of the call to Mr. Dean. He also said he was unable to say whether Mr. Nixon had telephoned other White House aides who have become ensnared in the growing Watergate bugging controversy.

The precise significance of Mr. Nixon's telephone call was not immediately clear.

Meanwhile, Representative Henry S. Reuss, Democrat of

Wisconsin, charged that Henry E. Petersen, the Assistant Attorney General who was named by the President to assume sole responsibility for the Watergate investigation, had "torpedoed" a House inquiry into the break-in last fall by contending then that it would endanger the rights of the seven original defendants. The Justice Department defended Mr. Petersen's opposition to the inquiry as proper and necessary.

The Federal grand jury continued its investigation into the Watergate episode today, but it was not known who, if anyone, testified. There were signs that no indictments would be issued this week, although at least five present and former White House aides are eventually expected to be named.

In a related move, the Committee for the Re-election of



John W. Dean 3d

the President turned over three cartons of campaign spending documents to a Federal court today, two days after attorneys for Common Cause, the public lobbying group that has sued the committee over its finances, filed a motion to hold the Republicans in contempt of court pending production of the records.

Mr. Dean was described as being pleased by the President's call "in the middle of the blitzkrieg," as one associate put it.

Another source who knew of the call was more skeptical, however.

"I can't understand it," the

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said. "You've got to be cynical as hell about it."

"Maybe he's trying to keep all of the sheep in the pasture until it's time for the slaughter," the Dean associate said, "or else maybe he just thinks it'd be awfully nice to have one kid from his staff pull through this."

Mr. Dean, who was publicly rebuked by the White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, last week, for issuing on his own a statement declaring that he would not be a "scapegoat" in the affair, has been telling friends that he will tell all to the grand jury investigating the Watergate episode.

Reuss Charges Petersen Torpedoed an Inquiry

The 34-year-old aide is known to have told friends that H. R. Haldeman, the White House chief of staff and a key Presidential adviser, was involved in the alleged cover-up after the arrests of seven men inside the Democratic National Committee headquarters last June 17.

Mr. Nixon's call to Mr. Dean came amid increasing speculation about the President's knowledge of the case. Some former ranking White House officials are now telling friends that many efforts were made last fall to warn the President that some White House aides were involved in the bugging and the alleged cover-up.

There were these other developments today:

Henry A. Kissinger, the President's adviser on national security affairs, pleaded for public understanding in the Watergate revelations. He told the annual Associated Press luncheon in New York that it was difficult "to avoid a sense of the awfulness of events and the tragedy that has befallen people alleged to have done these things for whatever reasons."

Thomas A. Kennelly of Washington, one of two attorneys representing G. Gordon Liddy, the leader of the Watergate break-in team who has refused to cooperate with the grand jury, told newsmen he was withdrawing from the case because his client would not listen to him. Liddy, who is in jail, has reportedly been defying White House pressure to talk.

Congressional sources disclosed that yet another secret 1972 campaign fund was kept in a Southern California bank under the direction of Herbert W. Kalmbach, one of President Nixon's chief campaign fund raisers. The sources, in confirming an account in The Washington Star-News, said upward of \$200,000 in cash was handled through at least four separate bank accounts controlled by Mr. Kalmbach, who met last week with the Watergate prosecutors.

Judge John J. Sirica, chief of the Federal Court here, ordered a grand jury investigation into leaks of secret testimony. His action followed the publication of four articles by Jack Anderson, the syndicated

columnist, that were apparently based on grand jury transcripts. Judge Sirica also refused a request by a convicted Watergate conspirator, James W. McCord Jr., to travel to England for a television appearance.

Mr. Anderson later issued a statement defending his columns, saying that under the Constitution, "we are free to publish any and all news generated by the White House, the Congress or the Courts." "No Federal rules of criminal procedure supersede the Constitution," Mr. Anderson said.

None of the former White House aides who described the warnings last year to Mr. Nixon about Watergate would speak publicly today. One source said that Charles W. Colson, the former Presidential counsel, held at least one discussion with The President before last November's election—in which Watergate played only a minor role—and urged him to dismiss those aides who had possibly been involved to limit any potential political damage.

The White House flatly denied the report, which initially was published in The Washington Post. Mr. Colson, who has been repeatedly mentioned in speculation as among those in the White House who knew of the bugging operation, denied giving a warning to the President, who was reported to have urged those who cautioned him to "give me some evidence."

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