

Dole: 'Fire All Implicated'

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President 'Owes It to the Republican Party'

WASHINGTON — (NNS) — Sen. Robert J. Dole, who headed the Republican National Committee during the 1972 presidential election campaign, says President Nixon owes it to the party, and to the presidency itself, to fire every White House aide remotely implicated in the Watergate scandal.

Speaking out after a long self-imposed silence, Dole, GOP "as-a-party-is-blame-free" man from January, 1971, until he was abruptly replaced this past January, said in an interview yesterday that the GOP "as a party is blameless" in the Watergate affair. The blame, he said, be-

longs to a "small group" of the President's men — but not the President himself, in Dole's view — men who "came into the politics at the top."

"They were part of the Administration, but not part of the party," Dole said. "They didn't know politics or people, they knew only power and arrogance."

The distinction Dole draws — one he admits the public is unlikely to buy — is between the Republican National Committee and its local and state officials, which he calls "the party," and the

unit known as the Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP), described as a "sort of superstructure imposed on the party for the campaign."

"The presidential campaign was tightly held by this group," Dole said. "They had the money and with it they had the power. It was frustrating at the time, but we understood very early they were going to run it, and we were going to be excluded. I was powerless to do anything. Our input was minimal."

Referring, for example, to

former Attorney General John Mitchell, who headed CREEP for a time, Dole said:

"I don't know what Mitchell's connection with the party was before Nixon brought him in with him. He (Nixon) also brought in Haldeman and Chapin and Magruder and all the others."

H. R. Haldeman is the White House chief of staff, President's former appointee Dwight Chapin was the "deputy secretary," and Jeb Stuart Magruder was former special presidential assistant and CREEP's No. 2 man.

Dole claimed he raised questions about the Watergate incident when he was national chairman but got no answers.

"They kept saying it was just a one-day story, or a one-week story, or a vendetta by the Washington Post," he recalled.

Dole, who reportedly was elbowed out of the national chairmanship by some of these same White House aides after the election, says he now has only compassion "for some of them."

"The pushers are getting pushed, now," Dole said, adding that there are those in the party who "go to sleep at night with a smile on their face."



ROBERT DOLE

Breaks Watergate silence