

President Was Termed 1 of 3 Decision Makers

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WASHINGTON, May 14—Jeb Stuart Magruder, who served as deputy campaign manager for the Committee for the Re-election of the President last political seminar early this year that President Nixon played a vital and active role in campaign planning and decision making until one month after the Watergate break-in.

"There was basically a triad of senior decision makers," Mr. Magruder told a Harvard seminar in early January, "the President, Bob Haldeman and John Mitchell—until July of '72. They were in constant consultation with each other over major activities."

A transcript of the two-day proceedings, sponsored by the Kennedy Institute of Politics and the Nieman Foundation at Harvard, was made available today to The New York Times.

A spokesman for Mr. Magruder had no comment on the transcript. Mr. Magruder has been reported by Federal and Senate sources to be facing grand jury indictment for his role both in the advance planning of the bugging of the Democratic National Committee headquarters here on June 17, 1972, and any subsequent cover-up.

Nixon Speech Recalled

Mr. Magruder's comments at the seminar offered a view different from that of the President himself. In his April 30 televised Watergate speech Mr. Nixon said that 1972 "was a year of crucially important decisions" in foreign affairs. Thus, he said, "I decided, as the 1972 campaign approached, that the Presidency should come first and politics second. To the maximum extent possible, therefore, I sought to delegate campaign operations, to remove the day-to-day campaign decisions from the President's office and from the White House."

It was not clear whether Mr. Nixon was referring to the primary elections that began early last year as well as the traditional fall campaigning after the nominating conventions.

Elsewhere in the transcript of his seminar remarks, Mr. Magruder depicted the President and the White House as being closely involved in crucial decision-making at the August convention of the Republican party. Asked who had made the decision on speeches and platform rhetoric at the convention,

Mr. Magruder replied:

'Approval of President'

"We had a joint group that consisted of approximately 20 people—White House aides, re-election committee aides, and Republican National Committee aides—who basically programed and decided the whole convention—with the approval of the President, of course." At least five or six aides from the White House took part in the effort, the former re-election official added.

Describing the basic campaign operation up to July of last year, Mr. Magruder said that "the staff work for the campaign was done at the Committee to Re-elect, primarily, with some additional staff work done by certain groups in the White House on certain specific subjects."

John N. Mitchell, the former Attorney General, was chairman of the re-election committee until he resigned two weeks after Watergate, and H. R. Haldeman, the former White House chief of staff, was one of Mr. Nixon's leading political advisers.

Mr. Magruder said that the re-election committee agreed to stay away from substantive policy issues in 1972 and worked instead on technical details such as setting up direct mail campaigns and coordinating the statewide political organizations.

'Staff System'

Similarly, he said, the White House stayed out of the political organizational process. "We used the same staff system that is used in the White House," Mr. Magruder added. "We broke up the campaign initially into 16 groups, and had deadlines as to when we had to have decisions made; we put the decision papers together and fired them off through John Mitchell into Bob Haldeman to the President."

"How many decisions the President actually made himself, I wouldn't know," he said. "How many were made by Bob Haldeman and John Mitchell directly were just a matter of percentages, I think." The basic decision-making process was not altered after Clark MacGregor was named campaign chairman following Mr. Mitchell's resignation, Mr. Mag-

ruder, said.

A check of Presidential documents showed that Mr. Nixon told a news conference last Aug. 29—the same press meeting in which he said an in-house investigation had cleared any officials still in the White House of involvement in Watergate—that "I am conducting this campaign and I have urged on my colleagues in the campaign to conduct it without regard to the polls."

Mr. Nixon also announced then that he did not plan to campaign heavily in the 10 remaining weeks before the election because "I shall always have to put my responsibilities to conduct the Presidency first."