

SYMINGTON CITES NEW DATA BY C.I.A.

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Says It Is Now Harder for Him to Believe Nixon Was Unaware of Cover-Up

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WASHINGTON, May 18 — Senator Stuart Symington said today that new data just given the Senate Armed Services Committee made it "even more difficult for me to visualize the the President" knew nothing about "White House attempts to use the Central Intelligence Agency to cover up the Watergate affair.

The new data consist of 11 memorandums of conversations that Sen. Vernon A. Walters, deputy director of the C.I.A., said that he made following conversations with White House aides last June, shortly after the break-in at the Democratic headquarters at the Watergate complex.

Senator Symington declined to disclose the exact contents of the memorandums but termed them "highly significant."

He said that he had sent copies to the Senate select committee on Presidential campaign activities, which opened a full-scale inquiry into the Watergate case yesterday, and to the United States Attorney, who is also investigating that case.

Visited White House

Testifying yesterday before the Senate Armed Services Committee, General Walters disclosed that he had recently visited the White House to talk with J. Fred Buzhardt Jr., who was named recently by President Nixon as special counsel for the Watergate investigation.

General Walters told the committee that, at the suggestion of Mr. Buzhardt, he had turned over to the White House some memorandums he had made last June of his recollections of conversations with Presidential aides.

At the direction of the Armed Services Committee, General Walters retrieved the memorandums from the White House late yesterday and delivered them to Senator Symington.

The memorandums are said to recount, in far more extensive detail, a series of meetings that General Walters had told about in an affidavit presented earlier this week to several Congressional committees.

Affidavit Described

In that affidavit, he told of meetings at which three top White House aides — H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman and John W. Dean 3d — attempted to persuade the C.I.A. to cover up the Watergate affair.

The general cited meetings at which he said the C.I.A. had been asked to persuade the Federal Bureau of Investigation to halt an inquiry into Nixon campaign funds that had been "laundered" through a Mexico City bank and later used, at least in part, to finance various undercover activities by the Presidential Re-election committee.

He also told of being asked by Mr. Dean to pay the salaries and bail of the men caught in the Watergate burglary, in an apparent effort to make the crime seem to be a legitimate national security matter.

He said that his agency had rejected both overtures. He also said that he had suggested to Mr. Dean that those responsible for the Watergate affair be dismissed.

Senator Symington said yesterday, before receiving the memorandums of conversation, that it appeared clear to him that there had been a "high-level" attempt by the White House to involve the C.I.A. in covering up the Watergate.

A Hint by Senator

He also said yesterday that General Walters and other present and past C.I.A. officials had testified that they did not know if President Nixon knew of the attempted cover-up of the Watergate affair.

However, Senator Symington added then: "It's hard for me to visualize that the President knew nothing about this."

In his statement today, the Senator hinted—but did not say—that there may have been material in the Walters memorandums indicating that White House aides had specifically said that their requests for C.I.A. help were being made with full knowledge of the President.

Meanwhile, two other Congressional committees have announced plans to inquire further into possible C.I.A. involvement in the Watergate affair.

Senator John L. McClellan, Democrat of Arkansas, announced that an Appropriations subcommittee that he heads had invited four former White House aides—Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Ehrlichman, Mr. Dean and David R. Young Jr.—to testify about their alleged demands for C.I.A. help in both the Watergate and Pentagon papers cases.

C.I.A. officials, in the last week, have told various Congressional committees that it was Mr. Young who had asked the agency to prepare a "personality assessment" on Dr. Daniel Ellsberg, who later was indicted on charges involving his copying and making public the Pentagon papers.