

H & E Blame Watergate On Mitchell

WASHINGTON — (UPI)—Former presidential aide John D. Ehrlichman has sworn he learned some weeks ago that John N. Mitchell and other key officials secretly discussed a specific proposal for bugging the Democrats' Watergate offices early in 1972, authoritative sources said yesterday.

The sources said H. R. Haldeman, who resigned April 30 as White House chief of staff, was said to have testified separately along the same lines, although with less specific information.

The sources said Ehrlichman testified that he was told the plan for electronic surveillance at the Watergate was brought up at the last of a series of three or four meetings arranged to discuss campaign intelligence gathering.

Dean, Magruder

The first of these meetings was said to have taken place late in December, 1971, or early in January, 1972, and to have been attended by Mitchell, then attorney general; White House counsel John W. Dean; Jeb S. Magruder, the deputy manager of President Nixon's re-election campaign; and G. Gordon Liddy, a former White House aide.

Some or all of these four persons were said to have been present at the later meetings and Ehrlichman said he was told Mitchell definitely was at the one where the Watergate bugging proposal was discussed

—Turn to Page 6, Col. 1

—From Page 1

— in February or March of 1972.

The sources said they could not positively say who Ehrlichman had identified as the source for his information, but that they thought he said it had come mainly from Magruder.

Demos' Civil Suit

Both Haldeman and Ehrlichman, who also resigned his White House job April 30, were said to have provided their information in making pre-trial depositions this week in the Democrats' \$6.4 million civil damage suit against the Committee for the Re-Election of the President.

For their part, Haldeman and Ehrlichman both denied that they had any advance knowledge of the Watergate conspiracy, the sources said. But the sources added that both former presidential aides refused to answer any questions about an alleged effort to cover up the June 17, 1972, incident.

Mitchell has acknowledged that he told a Federal grand jury investigating the Watergate bugging and break-in that he attended about three meetings early in 1972 where bugging was discussed. But he said he rejected all eavesdropping proposals and did not specify whether he had been present for any discussion of the Watergate planning.

Told Last March

The sources said Ehrlichman testified that two other proposals for political intelligence were presented for consideration by Mitchell and the others early in 1972, but that they were rejected out of hand. The sources could not identify these other proposals.

The sources said Ehrlichman testified that he first was told about the secret meetings late last March or

early in April.

Mitchell resigned as attorney general March 1, 1972, to become Nixon's campaign manager, and quit that post July 1, 1972, two weeks after the Watergate break-in. Magruder and Dean lost their administration jobs last month as a result of Watergate.

Haldeman testified he was told that one of the meetings was held by Mitchell in December, 1971, the sources said.

Ehrlichman said he was told of a similar meeting held by Mitchell last year in Key Biscayne, Fla., where Nixon has a vacation retreat, at which final approval was given to an intelligence gathering operation.

Ehrlichman also was said to have testified that Nixon asked him late last March to conduct inquiries into the Watergate affair.

Nixon has said "major developments" came to his attention about that time, presumably after convicted conspirator James W. McCord Jr. wrote the Watergate trial judge there had been perjury during the January trial and political pressure on the original defendants to keep quiet.

Answered some Questions

Frank Strickler, an attorney for Ehrlichman and Haldeman, and Maurice R. Dunie, one of the Democrats' lawyers, said the two former presidential aides answered only some of the questions put to them.