

Comments of Haldeman, Ehrlichman and General

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WASHINGTON, May 31—Following are the text of a statement read by H. R. Haldeman after testifying before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Intelligence operations today, excerpts from a statement presented by John D. Ehrlichman to the subcommittee yesterday and the text of a statement issued today by Gen. Robert E. Cushman Jr.:

Haldeman Statement

First, I can categorically state—and would like to—that at no time, nor in any way, did I suggest, direct or participate in any cover-up of the Watergate investigation.

Now with regard to the C.I.A., which is the subject under inquiry by this committee that I met with this morning, I confirmed to the committee today that I neither asked the C.I.A. to participate in any Watergate cover-up, nor did I ever suggest that the C.I.A. take any responsibility for the Watergate break-in.

I had only one contact with the C.I.A. regarding the Watergate. That was a meeting with Messrs. Helms, Walters and Ehrlichman held at the direction of the President last June because of a report from John Dean that the F.B.I. had requested guidance regarding some aspects of the Watergate investigation and of the possibility of C.I.A. involvement.

Request From Nixon

When I received this report from Mr. Dean, I advised the President and he in turn asked me to meet with John Ehrlichman and Director Helms and Gen. Walters. At that meeting, Gen. Walters was asked to meet with Director Gray of the F.B.I. to insure that any unrelated

covert operations of the C.I.A. or any unrelated national security activities which had been previously undertaken by some of the Watergate principals, not be compromised in the process of the Watergate investigation and the attendant publicity and political furor.

This was done with no intent or desire to impede or cover up any aspect of the Watergate investigation itself. Any other actions taken or suggestions made by others were without my knowledge and without the knowledge of the President.

I believe all of my actions were proper, in accord with the President's instructions and clearly in the national interest. Beyond that I have nothing further to say at this time on this matter and will let the matter rest.

EHRlichman STATEMENT

EXCERPTS The C.I.A. and the White House, 1971-1973

Questions have been raised concerning the property of the relationship between the White House and the C.I.A. during the years 1971-1973.

It is my hope that this statement will add a few facts toward answering some of these questions. It will also ask a few more questions, the answers to which can only be given by others.

I am ready and willing to provide any information I have to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee and any other proper body.

In general summary, I believe the White House has been scrupulous in observing the statutory limitations on C.I.A. activities and support.

There are two episodes which seem to require a detailed review in view of public statements calling White House actions into question. The first is the Central In-

telligence Agency's support of Howard Hunt in 1971. The second is the C.I.A.'s relationship to the Watergate break-in and subsequent events in 1972.

1971—The C.I.A. and Howard Hunt

Among the questions still to be asked are: How did Howard Hunt secure aid from the C.I.A.? What aid did he secure? How and why was aid cut off, and was the cut-off timely? What relationship was there between C.I.A. aid, its cut-off, and the burglary of a Dr. [Lewis] Fielding's office in Beverly Hills, California, in September of 1971?

How Did Hunt Secure C.I.A. Aid?

I received a phone call from General Robert Cushman, deputy director of the C.I.A., in late August, 1971 (he says it was August 27), saying that Hunt was receiving aid from the agency, which was becoming potentially awkward. I asked him whether Hunt was acting for the agency or the White House. He said the White House. I asked him what his assignment was from the White House. He said he did not know.

In response to his request I told the general I would take responsibility for the agency terminating its assistance to Hunt and, if there were any squawks or kickbacks from anyone in the White House, to simply refer them to me.

In 1969, in connection with a very different case, I had had occasion to discuss the statutory limitations of C.I.A. activity with General Cushman in some detail. He had clearly spelled out the limits

at that time and explained the C.I.A.'s continuous concern that it not go beyond statutory bounds.

A year and four months later, in December, 1972, John Dean advised me that the Assistant U.S. Attorney, Mr. [Earl J.] Silbert, needed information concerning C.I.A. help to Howard Hunt. I told Mr. Dean of my August, 1971 conversation with General Cushman. In a meeting with Director Helms, Mr. Coley and Dean, it was suggested I talk with the General to be sure of my facts.

On December 16, 1972, I phone General Cushman. He verified my recollection of the August 27 phone call and stated that he relieved I had called him prior to his July 22, 1971 meeting with Hunt to set it up. He stated, however, that he was actually uncertain who had called him in July, or the date of the call, which he believed was right after the Fourth of July.

The General now reports to this Senate subcommittee that he is sure that the caller was me, and he has sworn to his belief. But he mentioned his memoranda to the U.S. Attorney only with the briefest passing comment.

General Cushman is a fine officer and public servant who would not knowingly mislead anyone. Of this I am certain. That is not to say, however, that he, or I, or both of us might not be honestly mistaken in our distant recollections of this matter.

Mr. Chairman, this is a matter which I have found most troubling. I would like to tell this committee flatly, one way or the other, either that General Cushman is ab-

Cushman on the Watergate and C.I.A. Investigations

solutely right or absolutely wrong in saying that I called him on July 7, 1971.

I can say flatly that I do not have even the faintest recollection of having done so. I can say with assurance that any call to the C.I.A. is the kind of call that I usually have little or no difficulty remembering.

Contact With Hunt

My one and only view of Howard Hunt came on July 7, 1971, the day after Charles Colson hired him. Charles Colson and Mr. Hunt came to my office for a brief introductory meeting. We discussed Hunt's project, which was to be a review of the content of the Pentagon papers to determine their authenticity and accuracy. As far as I then knew, that was what he would be doing for the White House. That same day, about 2:30 P.M., I left for San Clemente. As of then I knew of no reason for Hunt to have C.I.A. aid.

One does not invoke C.I.A. aid lightly. At least I never did. I only did so a total of three times that I can recall, each time at the specific instruction of the President.

I am certain that the President did not instruct me to secure C.I.A. aid for Hunt.

The general and I discussed cutting off Hunt's C.I.A. support on August 27, 1971, according to his records.

The break-in in California did not occur until either Friday, September 3, or Monday, September 6 (Labor Day) (I have heard both dates used). Either seven or ten days had passed since the general and I agreed Hunt should be cut off.

If, in fact, Hunt used C.I.A. equipment or other support in the break-in, it is not clear

to me why he still had it then.

The C.I.A. and the Watergate—June, 1972

The President asked Mr. Haldeman to convene a meeting with Director [Richard] Helms and Deputy Director [Vernon] Walters after the Watergate investigation began. Mr. Haldeman told me the President wished me to "sit in." As it happened, my office was used for the meeting.

Mr. Haldeman said that the President was concerned about the effect of the F.B.I. investigation upon the agency. The President intended to require a full, vigorous F.B.I. investigation with no strings but believed that the trail might lead to agency people or activities either in this country or abroad. The President was especially concerned about agency activities in Mexico which might be disclosed.

Mr. Helms and General Walters were asked first, if the C.I.A. had a part in the Watergate break-in. They replied that it did not.

They were asked if a very vigorous examination of the past of the burglars or their money sources might jeopardize the secrecy of present or past C.I.A. operations, including those in Mexico.

They replied that no past operations would be jeopardized, so far as they could tell them. But General Walters would not say that the C.I.A. had no concern on the question of Mexican operations. I got the impression that Mr. Haldeman's shot had hit some target.

As a result of this equivocal response by General Walters respecting Mexican operations, he was asked to make contact with the acting F.B.I. Director Gray and give him all the facts. I believe the

general called Gray from my outer office to arrange to see him at once.

Dean Called Key Man

Helms and Walters were told that John Dean was following the Watergate matter closely for the President and any future White House contact could be with him. I'm not sure whether they were told this on the occasion of the meeting or later, but I do recall having some part in getting Walters to talk to Dean.

I believe I also informed Dean of the meeting, of my impression of Walters' response regarding C.I.A. Mexican operations and I believe I told Dean that Walters would be working with Gray on the problem.

Later Dean told me he had been in touch with Walters and that the C.I.A. did not believe an investigation would harm their operations. I was unaware of Dean's meetings or conversations with Walters regarding use of C.I.A. money for salaries for the defendants until the news reports this month about them.

During the first week of July, 1972, the President told me Pat Gray told him on the telephone that General Walters had told Gray there was no C.I.A. objection to a full F.B.I. investigation of the Mexican aspects of the Watergate case. The President said he then instructed Gray to conduct a full investigation.

The President told me then that he still personally believed and feared that the F.B.I. investigation might harm the agency.

He said he believed the C.I.A. would be making a mistake if it pretended an

investigation would not disclose some of its current operations. He said he hoped the general and other C.I.A. management were not covering up for their subordinates.

The President said substantially: A man makes a grave mistake in covering up for subordinates. That was President Truman's error in the Hiss case when he instructed the F.B.I. not to cooperate.

The President instructed that neither Gray nor Walters were to be interfered with in pressing the investigation. I conveyed a message to Pat Gray, as a result, that he alone was to determine the scope of the investigation.

Cushman Statement

May I say first I do not regard Mr. Ehrlichmann's position and mine as being necessarily contradictory. I did not initially recall accurately who had phoned me from the White House regarding Mr. Hunt. I can easily understand why Mr. Ehrlichmann does not remember the call. When I returned from Europe on the evening of May 10 to prepare to testify, a search of the C.I.A. records provided me with the facts I needed to refresh my memory and support my affidavit and subsequent testimony.

I wish to emphasize again what I have said many times—that in the phone call there was nothing improper, nor were there any details concerning what Mr. Hunt wanted. It would seem to me to be a non-issue.

I have no more to say on this matter, and I'm considering it closed. All of the appropriate memoranda and papers have been submitted to the necessary Congressional committees.