

Fund Control Is Admitted By Haldeman

By Peter Osnos

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H. R. (Bob) Haldeman has acknowledged that while he was White house chief of staff he had sole authority over the disbursal of money from a \$350,000 cash fund, part of which, federal investigators say, was paid to the Watergate conspirators for their silence.

In a sworn deposition released yesterday, Haldeman accounted for the expenditure of only \$22,000 of the money. That amount, he said, was spent on "advertising not directly related to the campaign."

Haldeman declined to say how the rest of the money was spent on the grounds that the question was outside the scope of the inquiry—a Democratic Party civil suit seeking damages as a result of the bugging and break-in at the Democrat's Watergate headquarters June 17, 1972.

In his deposition to the Democrats' attorneys, Haldeman also acknowledged for the first time that his office received reports on Nixon campaign committee intelligence operations against the Democrats. He said, however, they were not the result of the Watergate bugging and he said he did not remember seeing any of the reports himself.

The documents, Haldeman said, came to his aide Gordon Strachan and were identified as "Sedan Chair." "Sedan Chair" has been described in testimony this week before the Senate select Watergate committee as the code name for at least one Nixon campaign committee operative working in the campaign of Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey.

See HALDEMAN, A14, Col. 5

The deposition, taken May 22 to 24, is the first lengthy exposition of Haldeman's view of the events surrounding the Watergate affair, particularly the response at the top levels of the White House in months following the arrests at the Democratic headquarters.

It is also the first time that Haldeman has discussed in detail his own role in the internal White House investigations.

Until he resigned on April 30, Haldeman was considered President Nixon's closest aide and the man with the readiest access to the President.

In three days of answering questions put to him by lawyers for the Democrats, Haldeman made these points:

- President Nixon did not request a formal investigation of the Watergate affair until March 20, and until then received his reports on the affair largely from Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, the President's principal adviser on domestic matters who also resigned on April 30.

- That not until March 20 did the President assign then White House Counsel John W. Dean III to prepare a written report on the Watergate and before that no one had ever specifically assigned Dean to investigate the incident. President Nixon said last Aug. 29 that a Dean investigation had cleared all Nixon administration employees of involvement in the affair.

- He could not dispute Dean's statement that Dean had told Haldeman in early 1972 that Attorney General John N. Mitchell, Nixon campaign deputy director Jeb Stuart Magruder and Dean discussed conducting intelligence operations against the Democrats. "I have no reason to question his (Dean's) statement," Haldeman said.

- He has a taped statement from Magruder obtained on April 14 that Magruder had advance knowledge of the Watergate bugging, but he has never been told that Mitchell specifically approved bugging the Watergate. In his deposition in the Democratic suit, Ehr-

lichman said he was told by two former White House aides that Mitchell had approved the bugging.

- He was present in Mr. Nixon's office on April 15, when then acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray confirmed to Ehrlichman that he had destroyed "politically sensitive" documents that had been found in the White House safe of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr.

He added, however, that Dean had assure him that

he had not told Gray to destroy the documents, which have been identified by investigators as phony State Department cables drafted by Hunt and intended to implicate President Kennedy in the assassination of South Vietnam's President Ngo Dinh Dien in 1963.

Despite its length of 287 pages and its wide range, Haldeman's deposition does not add significantly to what has already been made public about the Watergate

affair in the news media and in Capitol Hill investigations.

However, on the matter of the \$350,000 cash fund that Haldeman controlled, the deposition does break some new ground. Last fall, in the strongest of a series of denials about stories appearing in The Washington Post, the White House denied that Haldeman had been authorized to approve payments from secret Nixon campaign funds.