

SF Chronicle

Dean Says Nixon In on Clemency

Washington

Fired White House counsel John W. Dean III has reported to Senate investigators that he was told President Nixon was consulted in advance about an offer of executive clemency to a convicted Watergate conspirator.

Dean also said he has documents that show Mr. Nixon requested that Internal Revenue Service tax audits "be turned off on friends" of the President, according to a summary of Dean's interview with Senate Watergate committee staff members.

Excerpts of the summary were obtained by The Associated Press. The interview was conducted behind closed doors on Saturday.

The summary said:

"Nixon said that the Democrats had always had effective use of IRS audits, but they had failed. Dean has

documents where President Nixon requested that tax audits be turned off on friends of his. Haldeman was taking notes at this meeting."

It did not spell out what Dean meant by effective use of IRS audits.

Dean also told the committee staff members that he was told by the President that Mr. Nixon "hoped Dean was keeping a list of press who were giving them trouble and they would take care of them after the election," the summary said.

The reported clemency offer involved E. Howard Hunt, convicted in January at the Watergate trial.

The summary quoted Dean as indicating that former special presidential aide Charles W. Colson was involved in the Watergate coverup and conveyed a message from Hunt's lawyer that the White House "would have to do something for Hunt."

Former domestic affairs adviser John D. Ehrlichman said he had "checked with the President and that Colson should tell (William) Bittman that there would be clemency," the summary said. Bittman is Hunt's attorney.

STORY

Dean told the investigators he heard that story from Colson and later discussed it with the President.

The summary on Dean's closed door statements quoted him as saying he has a tape of a conversation between Hunt and Colson in which Hunt asked for money. The summary said Dean received a message from Hunt in which the con-

From Page 1

victed conspirator said he wanted \$72,000 for living expenses and \$50,000 for legal fees "or Hunt would have things to say about the seamy things Hunt did for Ehrlichman while Hunt was at the White House."

The summary said Dean relayed the message to Ehrlichman who told him to call former Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

"On March 21 or 22," the summary said, "Ehrlichman asked Mitchell if Hunt's problem had been taken care of and Mitchell said, 'yes,' Hunt's request for money came to the attention of the President, the summary said.

EXCERPTS

Following are excerpts from the summary:

"On March 20, Dean talked to the President and asked to see the President the next day. Dean was going to tell the President all he knew.

"On March 22 there was a meeting with former presidential chief of staff H. R. Haldeman and Ehrlichman. There was an effort to get Mitchell to take the heat for pre-situation and avoid grand jury and others from getting to the post-situation."

This language presumably referred to the period before and after the June 17, 1972 break-in at Democratic national headquarters.

Dean is scheduled to testify next week before the Senate committee.

Associated Press