

Dean Tells Panel President Discussed
Cover-Up, Clemency in March, April

Justice Pressured To Aid Cover-Up, Witness Asserts

By John Hanrahan

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Justice Department, which served as the symbol of the Nixon Administration's law and order posture, was manipulated and pressured repeatedly to assist in a cover-up of the Watergate affair, John W. Dean III told the Senate Watergate committee yesterday.

Dean said that whenever the federal investigation was

Watergate News Inside

A proposal by H. R. Haldeman for a White House counterattack that would have linked foreign or Communist money to anti-Nixon demonstrations is among the 44 documents provided by John W. Dean III to the Senate Watergate committee.

Page A7

Dean draws a picture of a pre-election White House neurotically concerned with demonstrators and morbidly fascinated with gossip and intelligence about the Democratic opposition.

Page A14.

U.S. District Judge Charles R. Richey describes as "sheer poppycock" a charge by Dean that the judge had promised to be helpful to Republicans.

Page A7.

Repeated White House attempts to block an early congressional investigation of the Watergate scandal are detailed by Dean.

Page A7

Classified Bell System information was used by White House wiretappers who bugged the telephone of columnist Joseph Kraft, Dean says.

Page A6.

getting too close to the White House, the calls went out from him or other top presidential aides to get the Justice Department or the FBI to lay off or ease up on certain aspects of the probe.

Initially, many of the calls went to then-Attorney General Richard Kleindienst and then-acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray III. As time went on, Dean said, more and more of the calls were going to Henry E. Petersen, assistant attorney general in charge of the Justice Department's criminal division.

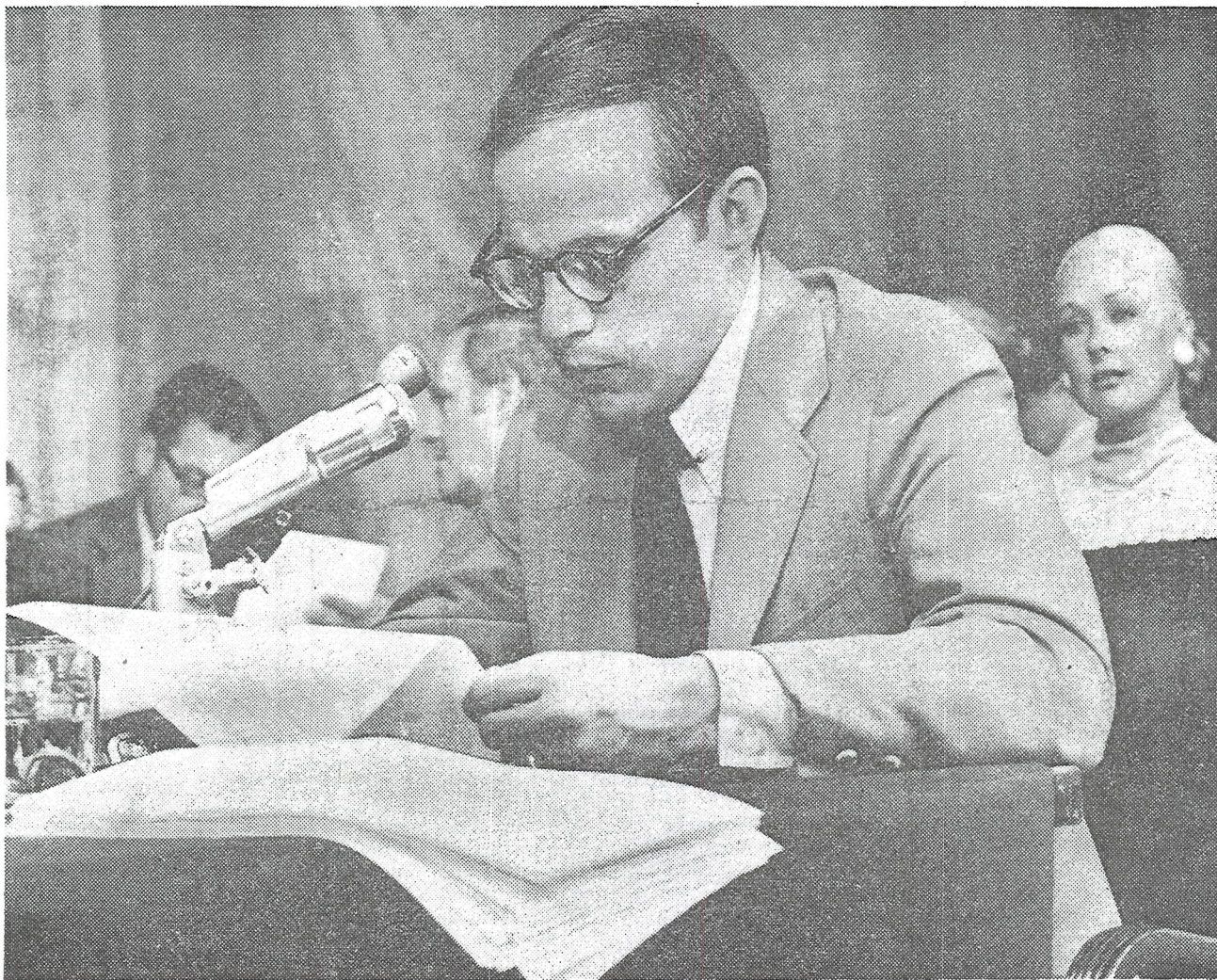
Despite some damaging testimony by Dean about Gray and Kleindienst, it was Petersen who emerged from yesterday's hearing as a key figure—however reluctant or unwilling—in the Watergate cover-up.

Petersen, Kleindienst and Gray were called for comment yesterday, but did not return the calls.

Dean testified that Kleindienst was disliked by top White House aides John D. Ehrlichman and H. R. Haldeman and often did not follow up on instructions given him by the White House. Gray was regarded by some at the White House as being too zealous in his pursuit of the Watergate investigation, Dean said.

But Petersen, according to Dean's account, was most often cooperative in handling

See JUSTICE, A14, Col. 1



By James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

John Dean testifies at hearings held by the Senate select committee on the Watergate. His wife is behind him.

JUSTICE, From A1

White House requests during the cover-up phase.

Petersen, Dean said, first came into the picture two or three days after the Watergate arrests on June 17 of last year. Dean said he had gone to Kleindienst's office to express his concern that the Watergate probe "could lead directly to the President."

Dean said he found Kleindienst "dismayed and angered that such a stupid thing" as the Watergate episode had occurred. Kleindienst, according to Dean, then said that (Watergate conspirator) G. Gordon Liddy, accompanied by Nixon campaign aide Powell Moore, had sought him out at the Burning Tree Country Club the weekend of the arrests.

"He (Kleindienst) said he was incredulous when Liddy stated that (former attorney General) John Mitchell had instructed him (Liddy) to tell Kleindienst to get the men who had been arrested out of jail."

Dean said Kleindienst told him "that he cut Liddy off and told him he would not talk with him." Dean said he warned Kleindienst that if the investigation led directly to the White House, "I suspected the chances of re-electing the President would be severely damaged."

It was then, Dean said, that Kleindienst called for Petersen to come to his office.

While waiting for Petersen, Dean said "Kleindienst told me that my superiors at the White House never understood that once an investigation begins, it runs its full course. He Kl(eindienst) said he was always being asked to take care of this matter or that matter, as if by magic he could make something unpleasant go away. I said I was well aware of that attitude and that I had never been able to get through to anyone at the White House that things just didn't work that way."

Petersen then came in, gave a status report of the Watergate investigation and then was told of Dean's "concern" that the probe could lead into the White House, Dean said.

Petersen, Dean said, "was

troubled by the case and the implications of it." A few minutes later, alone with Petersen, Dean said he had told Petersen that "I didn't think the White House could withstand a wide open investigation."

Dean said he later told Ehrlichman "that I felt Petersen would handle the matter fairly and not pursue a wide-open inquiry into everything the White House had been doing for four years." Dean said Petersen had given him "the impression ... that he realized the problems a wide-open investigation of the White House might create in an election year."

After that initial meeting, Dean said, there were many more contacts with Petersen. In mid-August, Jeb Stuart Magruder, deputy campaign manager, was to testify before the grand jury. (Magruder has since told the Watergate committee he committed perjury before the grand jury and later at the Watergate trial in January).

Because of concern from Haldeman, relayed through an aide, that Magruder's grand jury testimony would not hold up, Dean said he called Petersen to find out how Magruder had performed before the panel.

Petersen "called back and said he (Magruder) had made it through by the skin of his teeth."

This, Dean notes, was a key point in the probe, "because this meant that the investigation would not go beyond Liddy."

Still, Dean related, there were more problems. White House aide Charles W. Colson "was outraged" that he was being called before the grand jury and "was very insistent that something be done about the situation." So, Dean said, "I called Henry Petersen . . ."

Petersen later called back to say he had made special arrangements for Colson and other White House aides—Egil Krogh Jr., Dwight Chapin, Gordon Strachan and David Young. Under this arrangement, Dean said, the witnesses would not go before the grand jury to be interrogated, but rather would go to the Justice Department where they would give sworn statements without their lawyers present "and

later the prosecutors would read the statement to the grand jury."

Petersen balked later, though, at letting Maurice Stans, the Nixon campaign finance chief, follow the same procedure, Dean said. Ehrlichman then "called Petersen and was very harsh" in telling him "that he should honor the White House request."

Petersen was more cooperative, Dean said, in being part of a White House effort to block an investigation by Rep. Wright Patman (D-Tex.) and his House Banking and Currency Committee into the Watergate affair.

Upon prodding from Dean, Petersen responded on Oct. 2 to a letter from Rep. Garry Brown (R-Mich.) and said the Patman hearings could harm the successful prosecution of the Watergate case, Dean said. Brown's letter had appar-

ently been prompted by a visit to Brown by Paul O'Brien, an attorney for the re-election committee, according to Dean's testimony.

The aim, Dean said, was to use the Justice Department response as ammunition to get other committee members to vote against letting Patman hold the hearings. The effort to block the hearings was successful.

Petersen also helped stifle an investigation into the alleged political espionage and sabotage activities of Donald Segretti, Dean said. Dean said that before Segretti's grand jury appearance, he (Dean) told Petersen that Segretti was not involved in the Watergate incident but had performed "some campaign activities" for the White House under the direction of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr.

Dean said he also told Petersen that Segretti was

being paid for his work by Herbert W. Kalmbach, the President's personal attorney, and that he had been recruited by White House aides Strachan and Chapin.

If this information came out, Dean said he told Petersen, it "would obviously be quite embarrassing and could cause political problems during the waning weeks of the election."

Dean said Petersen answered that he "understood the problem" and later reported "that he did not believe it was necessary for the prosecutors" to question Segretti about those matters.

He said Petersen later told him that prosecutor Earl Silbert "had tried to avoid getting into this area" but that it had been touched on when "a grand juror had asked the question despite the fact that the prosecutors had tried to gloss over it."