

Pressure on Nixon

Dean Unshaken As His Senate Testimony Ends

Washington

John W. Dean III completed his long appearance before the Senate Watergate committee yesterday, unshaken from his central charge that President Nixon had been an active participant in the Watergate coverup.

When the 34-year-old former White House legal counsel left the witness table late yesterday, his personal integrity was in question, his legal career was in peril, but four days of rigorous examination by the Senate Investigating Committee had not rebutted his accusations against Mr. Nixon.

Three of the seven senators on the committee hinted that they would welcome a voluntary appearance by the President to answer the charges. They cited precedents — involving Presidents Lincoln and Wilson — for Mr. Nixon to undergo questioning by a congressional investigating committee.

There was no indication from the White House, however, that the President would alter his adamant refusal to testify at the Watergate hearings.

TONE

The atmosphere in the caucus room of the old Senate Office Building yesterday was relaxed, almost convivial. The tension uncoiled, senators swapped hill country stories, the committee became embroiled in a legal debate over the admissibility of hearsay evidence and, more than once, the audience erupted in mirthful laughter.

But Dean remained deadly serious, his nasal voice strong, as he recounted once more, without variation but with occasional elaboration,

the central strands of his accusations against the President.

He acknowledged that he is "quite aware of the fact" that his testimony might be disputed by future witnesses — such as former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, who will take the stand at the hearings when they resume on July 10, or

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former White House aides H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, who are to testify later next month.

WORD

Dean told Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. (Rep-Tenn.) that in all likelihood, "it is going to be my word against one man's word, it is going to be my word against two men's, it is going to be my word against three men's, and probably, in some cases, it is going to be my word against four men's."

But he added that he is "prepared to stand on my word and the truth and the knowledge and the facts I have. I know the truth is my ally in this and I think, ultimately, the truth is going to come out."

As the committee, along with the rest of Congress, recessed for an Independence Day vacation, Dean left behind him in the Watergate hearing record the undocumented but as yet unchallenged strands of his case against Mr. Nixon.

He insisted that "there is

no doubt in my mind" that the President was aware of the coverup when Mr. Nixon complimented Dean last September 15 for his handling of the Watergate case.

Dean told once more of his conversation with the President on February 27, when, Dean contended, Mr. Nixon stated that Haldeman and Ehrlichman were "principals" in the case, and of a discussion the next day when Dean said the President told him not to worry about having been involved in obstruction of justice.

Again Dean recounted his dealings with the President in March, including discussions of \$1 million that might be needed to keep Watergate break-in defendants silent about the involvement of others, and an alleged promise by the President of executive clemency for one of the conspirators.

He again told the Senators, the audience and those watching the nationwide telecast of the hearings that he had sought — in his own view unsuccessfully — to convince Mr. Nixon on March 21 to publicly end the coverup.

And he recalled for the last time at the witness table a telephone conversation on March 23 in which, Dean said, the President told him

"your prediction was right" that the coverup web would come unraveled.

NIXON

Dean's five days before the committee — almost exactly 29 hours of testimony — appeared to have persuaded most of the senators on the panel that Mr. Nixon must respond at some point with a cohesive defense.

Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. (Dem-N.C.), the committee chairman, and Senator Baker, the ranking Republican, had suggested publicly Thursday that they would welcome Mr. Nixon's testimony, preferably under oath.

But the White House ruled this out through a presidential spokesman again Thursday, terming such an appearance "constitutionally inappropriate."

ARTICLE

Yesterday afternoon, after Dean had reasserted his faith that his account would ultimately be proved accur-

ate, Ervin pulled from his files a wrinkled photostat of a news article in the Feb. 14, 1862, edition of the New York Tribune.

Tracing the words with a gnarled finger, Ervin read: "President Lincoln today voluntarily appeared before the House Judiciary Com-

mittee and gave testimony in the matter of the premature publication in the (New York) Herald of a portion of his last annual message."

The committee chairman noted, with evident relish, that "this is an item concerning the manner in which President Lincoln — the first Republican chief executive — volunteered to appear and testify before the House committee."

WILSON

Immediately Baker recalled another precedent, "not nearly as old as your precedent," from the 1919 dispute between President Wilson and Congress over the treaty of Versailles.

Baker said that Wilson, instead of appearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had "invited the committee to meet with him" at the White House.

"So, as we say in Tennessee, there are lots of ways to skin a cat and I wouldn't presume to say how we go about it," Baker stated.

Afterward Senator Edward J. Gurney of Florida demonstrated again his skeptical reaction to Dean's testimony.

MEETING

Gurney, who put Dean through a strenuous three-hour cross-examination two days earlier, sought yesterday to question Dean's credibility by shaking his recollection — with some success — of meeting exactly one year ago to arrange for payoffs of "silence money" to Watergate defendants.

Dean had testified a number of times this week that he met with Herbert W. Kalmbach, Mr. Nixon's personal attorney, at the Mayflower Hotel a few blocks from the White House.

HOTEL

But Gurney produced records from the Mayflower and the nearby Statler-Hilton hotel to show that Kalmbach had been a guest that night in the Statler-Hilton and not, as Dean re-

But a few minutes later, Robert C. McCandless, one of Dean's attorneys, whispered into his ear, and Dean calmly reminded Gurney that he had persistently stated the meeting had begun in the hotel coffee shop and ad-

Dean, whose composure at the hearings has been one of his hallmarks, was visibly rattled. His hands were clenched instead of clasped, his brow furrowed rather than smooth.

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er. "I am never sure which is the Mayflower and which is the Statler-Hilton," Dean said, adding under stern but smiling — quizzing by Gurney that he had lived in

New York Times