

Working on Watergate

Nixon's New Legal Staff

Washington

At least a half-dozen lawyers are working at the White House on President Nixon's defense in the Watergate case, either full-time or nearly full-time.

J. Fred Buzhardt Jr., a former counsel to the Department of Defense, heads the operation, with Leonard Garment, the acting White House counsel, working as his partner while also handling a large number of other matters for the President.

Charles Alan Wright, a professor at the University of Texas Law School, has been working as a \$150-a-day consultant with an office next to Garment's.

UNDERPINNING

Wright, a conservative constitutional lawyer who argued before the Supreme Court against the 18-year-old vote, is temporarily in Europe, but is expected to return to work at the White House next week.

According to informed



J. FRED BUZHARDT JR.
Head of ad hoc group

sources, Wright provided much of the legal underpinning for Mr. Nixon's refusal to appear before the Senate Watergate Committee or to turn White House documents over to it.

Other members of the staff, according to these sources, are Robert R. Andrews, borrowed from the Department of Defense; Douglas Parker, borrowed from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Thomas P. Marinis Jr., a 30-year-old associate in the Houston law firm of John B. Connally.

Little has been made known by White House spokesmen about the Buzhardt group's operations, and there has been no response from Buzhardt to repeated requests for information. But other presidential aides have given a fairly detailed account of the situation.

RESPONSE

"They've tried hard to orchestrate the White House response to all the charges and countercharges," one official said of the lawyers, "but things keep getting away from them, and I don't think the public impression is a very favorable one."

Garment, Buzhardt, or

both, regularly brief the White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, or his deputy, Gerald L. Warren, before they brief the press, telling them what questions they can answer and how far they can go.

But none of the lawyers knew, for example, that Julie Nixon Eisenhower, the President's younger daughter, was going to say last week that her father had considered resigning.

INSISTED

Warren subsequently insisted that Mr. Nixon had never seriously entertained such a thought, and Mrs. Eisenhower insisted just as firmly that he had. Warren said yesterday he would not comment further.

Another snafu developed when the ad hoc lawyers' group — set up because the White House has been cut off from the Department of Justice by Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson — prepared a set of questions to be used in the interrogation of John W. Dean III.

The questions for the former White House counsel were supplied to Senator Daniel K. Inouye (Dem-Hawaii) "for his own use in formulating questions," one of the lawyers said they had been only roughly formulated, he added, and they "were full of typos and blank page references and so on."

VERBATIM

But Inouye proceeded to read the questions verbatim, offering Dean a chance to answer them. The lawyers, watching on television, were stunned. One of them said he felt he had been "sandbagged."

The White House had to disavow the memo in which the questions were conveyed, one source said, because it seemed to put the blame on former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, something the lawyers did not feel it appropriate to do publicly.

Garment and Buzhardt have both conferred repeatedly with Samuel Dash, the Senate committee's chief counsel, both by telephone and in person. But there is no indication that they have talked with any members of the committee.

Neither man is believed to see Mr. Nixon very often.

STATEMENT

Warren conceded, however, that Buzhardt had talked with the President at San Clemente last Tuesday about the presidential statement issued Saturday.

At the time, the White House denied that Mr. Nixon had received any unannounced visitors.

The sources said Buzhardt and Garment were primarily responsible for the President's May 22 statement on Watergate, but that Parker, Ziegler, General Alexander M. Haig Jr., the President's chief of staff, and Raymond Price and Patrick Buchanan, his speech writers, had also worked on it.

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