

The Haldeman -

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H. R. Haldeman and John N. Mitchell talked about the "adequacy" of an intelligence operation in the spring of 1972, immediately after Mitchell returned from Key Biscayne where plans for the Watergate bugging were discussed, according to a former aide to Haldeman.

In a closed-door appearance before members of the Senate Watergate Committee last week, the aide, Gordon Strachan, gave the strongest testimony to date suggesting the possibility that Haldeman, who was

then President Nixon's chief of staff, knew about discussions of bugging plans.

Strachan said Haldeman and Mitchell, who was then Mr. Nixon's campaign manager, discussed the intelligence operation on the telephone on April 4, 1972, and set up a meeting on the subject.

Strachan testified that, based on memos he later destroyed, he concluded that the discussion between Mitchell and Haldeman had to be about the Watergate operation. Mitchell has testified before the Senate committee that the only intelligence-gathering operation he discussed was that involving the Watergate, but that he rejected the Water-

gate plans during the Key Biscayne meeting on March 30, 1972.

The deputy campaign director for President Nixon's campaign, Jeb Stuart Magruder, has testified that Mitchell approved the plans at the Key Biscayne meeting.

Frederic C. LaRue, a Mitchell aide who was the third person at the Key Biscayne meeting, testified publicly before the Senate Watergate Committee Wednesday that Mitchell neither approved nor rejected the plans but instead suggested that a decision could be made later on.

Strachan's testimony about the telephone discus-

sion between Mitchell and Haldeman five days later, on April 4, tends to support either Magruder's or LaRue's version of the Key Biscayne meeting.

One Senate source familiar with Strachan's testimony said: "Here Mitchell and Haldeman are talking about the 'adequacy' of the intelligence plan five days after Mitchell claimed he rejected it."

Mitchell's logs of telephone calls and meetings show that on April 4 — the day he returned from Key Biscayne — he talked on the telephone with Haldeman at 12:30 p.m. and met with him at 2:45 p.m. Strachan apparently did not testify as to the substance of the meeting.

Mitchell Memos

A summary of Strachan's testimony made available to the Washington Post also quotes Strachan as saying that Magruder called him after the Key Biscayne meeting with Mitchell.

In the words of the summary, the President's reelection committee "now has a sophisticated intelligence-gathering capability" with an approved budget of about \$300,000, Strachan said Magruder told him.

To show the relationship between the Mitchell-Haldeman intelligence-gathering discussion and the Watergate operation, Strachan testified that Haldeman ordered him to destroy a memo about a meeting

Mitchell and Haldeman scheduled about intelligence gathering after their phone call.

Haldeman ordered that the memo be destroyed immediately after the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in, Strachan testified. In addition, Strachan testified that Haldeman ordered six other documents destroyed at that time — including two dealing with intelligence done by G. Gordon Liddy, later convicted in the Watergate conspiracy.

The summary of Strachan's testimony says Strachan told the Senate committee that the documents he destroyed included a memo from Magruder on

the Key Biscayne meeting with Mitchell.

The summary says Strachan testified that Haldeman read that memo but perhaps not in its entirety. It is unclear whether the memo made a specific reference to the Watergate bugging plan.

The other memos which were destroyed included documents which indicate that Haldeman had knowledge of other intelligence operations.

Specifically, the destroyed memos included "a handwritten note when Haldeman instructed Strachan to have Liddy move emphasis from Muskie to McGovern," according to the summary

of Strachan's testimony.

During the Watergate trial last January, Thomas Gregory, a Brigham Young University student who worked for Liddy's co-conspirator, E. Howard Hunt Jr., testified that he first spied on the campaign of Senator Edmund S. Muskie (Dem-Me.) last year and later shifted to the campaign of Senator George S. McGovern (Dem-S.D.).

Strachan also testified that he destroyed a memo that instructed Donald H. Segretti, an alleged political saboteur, to discontinue reporting to Dwight L. Chapin, the President's appointments secretary, and commence reporting to Liddy.