

GOP Aide Says He Was Lied to On Watergate

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President Nixon's former campaign director, Clark MacGregor, says that he was "misled, deceived and . . . lied to repeatedly" by White House and Nixon campaign aides over the Watergate affair during the 1972 campaign. His sharpest criticism is directed at John D. Ehrlichman, the President's former top domestic aide.

In a sometimes strongly worded, 113-page deposition made public yesterday, MacGregor also said that President Nixon personally instructed him to report directly to Mr. Nixon on campaign matters last year.

This assertion by MacGregor is in possible conflict with portions of Mr. Nixon's April 30 speech in which he said one of the reasons he did not learn the truth about Watergate sooner was that he had tried to remove himself from the campaign as much as possible to concentrate on important presidential matters.

In that speech, Mr. Nixon said:

"I decided, as the 1972 campaign approached, that the presidency should come first and politics second. To the maximum extent possible, therefore, I sought to delegate campaign operations, to remove the day-to-day campaign decisions from the President's office and from the White House. I also, as you recall, severely limited the number of my own campaign appearances."

In his deposition, MacGregor said Mr. Nixon told him on June 30, 1972, that no one but the President could give him orders. In that meeting, MacGregor said he and Mr. Nixon agreed "that I would take direction in the conduct of the campaign from and after July 3 from the President and the President only, that when either I was traveling or he was traveling and we might have difficulty in reaching one another personally that (H. R.) Bob Haldeman would be the channel of communication between the President and me." (Haldeman was White House chief of staff until he resigned April 30.)

MacGregor's deposition was given July 20 in connection with the civil suits that grew

out of the Watergate arrests. While not stating specifically who he believes lied to him, MacGregor was harshest in discussing Ehrlichman.

Ehrlichman, who resigned his post April 30, testified for four days last week before the Senate Select Committee on the Watergate. In his testimony, Ehrlichman said he wanted the Watergate affair investigated last summer so that a full disclosure could be made and the White House could be cleared of any involvement in the matter.

MacGregor, however, paints a picture of Ehrlichman as one who was unwilling to disclose information relevant to the Watergate affair, and who put MacGregor in the position of issuing press statements on Watergate without having all the information available to the White House.

See MACGREGOR, A11, Col. 1

MACGREGOR, From A1

MacGregor, who took over as campaign director July 1, 1972, after John N. Mitchell resigned the post, stated:

"I don't recall that Ehrlichman was a champion of disclosure during this particular period. Ehrlichman never, for example, told me about the (Daniel) Ellsberg psychiatrist's office break-in. Ehrlichman never told me about the late June meeting that appeared in the press between (L.) Patrick Gray, John W. Dean III and John Ehrlichman in Ehrlichman's office. Ehrlichman never told me about this meeting with the CIA, either with (Richard) Helms or with any other official of the CIA."

"It appears as though John Ehrlichman had a great deal of information which was available for disclosure which was unknown to me and thus, of course, it is utterly ridiculous for John Ehrlichman, who had

a great deal of information I didn't have, to be calling on me to disclose information that I didn't possess but which was known to him."

The information MacGregor referred to was discussed by Ehrlichman during his Watergate testimony last week. In his testimony, Ehrlichman defended the break-in at Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office in September, 1971, on national security grounds. Ellsberg was then under indictment in the Pentagon Papers case. (The charges were dismissed in May.)

Ehrlichman also defended his meeting with then-CIA Director Helms on national security grounds. Ehrlichman said he was trying to insure that the Watergate investigation did not publicly disclose legitimate CIA operations because of the involvement of ex-CIA agents in the affair. In his meeting with White House counsel Dean and then acting FBI Director Gray, Ehrlichman said, he did not suggest that Gray destroy documents found in the White House safe of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt.

MacGregor insists he was kept in the dark as to White House links to the Watergate affair. It was under these circumstances he said, that Ehrlichman pressed him to issue on Oct. 16 a news release that attacked The Washington Post's reporting of the Watergate affair and also charged that Democratic presidential candidate Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) "personally encouraged Daniel Ellsberg" to break the law.

Ehrlichman, in his testimony last week, said that the Watergate affair did not much concern him because that was not within his field of activity. However, MacGregor, in his deposition, indicates that Ehrlichman was deeply concerned with an Oct. 16 Post story and others that linked the White House to the Watergate affair.

The Oct. 16 Post story said Mr. Nixon's personal attorney, Herbert W. Kalmbach, was one of five persons authorized to approve payments from the Nixon campaign's secret intelligence gathering and espionage fund. The story also named White House aides Gordon Strachan and Dwight Chapin as having hired alleged political saboteur Donald H. Segretti.

"At one or more of the

meetings that I attended during the morning of that day (Oct. 16)," MacGregor said, "Outrage was expressed by or on behalf of the people who were mentioned in The Washington Post story and I was advised, that (White House press secretary) Ron Ziegler was going to denounce the

news account, that (Sen.) Bob Dole (then the Republican national committee chairman) was going to denounce the news account and I indicated a couple of times during the day that that ought to be sufficient."

About midafternoon, MacGregor said, Ehrlichman called him "with as John put it, a special personal plea that I ought to issue a statement that I had looked at earlier and had rejected." MacGregor said Ehrlichman expressed "strong disagreement" with MacGregor's view that statements by Dole and Ziegler would be sufficient.

"He made a personal plea, MacGregor said, "that I meet with the press, don't answer any questions, just issue the statement, read the statement and walk out of the press room, and I said 'John, that isn't my style. I have never done that.'"

Finally after more discussion, MacGregor agreed to Ehrlichman's request and issued the statement without answering reporter's questions. MacGregor said Ehrlichman told him that he should not answer questions because if he did, "the lead out of your press conference will be some aspects of the questions and answers and that will dilute or totally obscure the impact that we want from the statement."

MacGregor said he was unaware who wrote the statement that accused the Post of engaging in "innuendo, third-person hearsay, unsubstantiated charges, anonymous sources, and huge scare headlines." In his deposition, MacGregor said he now believes there were "misstatements" in that Oct. 16 news release.

(White House aide Richard Moore has testified to the Senate Watergate committee that he assisted in preparing the statement.)

In an interview published in the Post on Oct. 15, MacGregor had indicated that private Republican polls showed Nixon had slipped 2 to 3 percentage points as a result of the Watergate affair.

At the time, MacGregor said, what he was being told by White House and campaign aides "made sense. The truth would have been incredible to

paings in the key states of New York and California. MacGregor said Mr. Nixon said that Mitchell should do this because of his close personal relationships with New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller and California Gov. Ronald Reagan. Mitchell had announced he was leaving the campaign for family reasons but would help out as a consultant.

MacGregor, who became a vice president of United Aircraft Corp. immediately after the election, testified that he met regularly with Mr. Nixon during the campaign, but that they never again discussed Watergate after the initial June 30 meeting.

-He said the only possible warnings he received on the Watergate came in separate conversations last summer with Gray and campaign aide



CLARK MacGREGOR
... 113-page deposition

Robert Mardian, a former assistant attorney general. Gray had told him July 5 that Watergate "may hurt" Nixon in the campaign. Mardian warned him that perhaps more than five persons were involved in the Watergate break-in.

MacGregor said he personally asked Mitchell, Jeb Stuart Magruder and other campaign aides if they had had involvement in the Watergate affair and was always assured they had not.

In his Aug. 29 press conference, Mr. Nixon said an investigation by Dean had cleared all present White House employees of wrongdoing. (Dean has denied making any investigation.) In addition, Mr. Nixon said MacGregor was conducting an investigation. MacGregor said in his deposition that all he did was ask other aides whether they were involved.

MacGregor said he had no idea re-election committee funds were being used to pay Watergate defendants and their lawyers and that he was unaware of any illegal "dirty tricks" in the campaign.

me had I been told it at that time." Looking back, MacGregor said, "It seems obvious now that I was misled, deceived and in the phraseology of one story in the New York Times 'lied to repeatedly.'"

MacGregor said he took the post of campaign chairman, succeeding Mitchell, at Mr. Nixon's personal request at a June 30, 1972 meeting.

In that meeting, Mr. Nixon indicated a familiarity with the campaign, according to MacGregor's testimony. MacGregor stated that Mr. Nixon felt that registration of voters "who viewed his accomplishments favorably . . . had not been given sufficient attention by the campaign organization to that date . . ."

Also, MacGregor said, Mr. Nixon "indicated he thought the campaign was top-heavy with people in Washington and too thin in personnel, particularly volunteer personnel, in the precincts throughout the country. He indicated also that he thought that the campaign, as far as the Washington projection, was too rich" and suggested that he "put a lid on employment" at the D.C. headquarters of the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

In his April 30 speech, Mr. Nixon had indicated that he concentrated on being President and not on campaigning. In a press conference last Aug. 29, however, Mr. Nixon said he planned to campaign hard, regardless of how far ahead the polls showed him, just as he had done in all previous campaigns. He said his motto was: "Always run as if you are one million votes behind, and then you might win by one vote."

In all of his meetings with Mr. Nixon during the campaign, MacGregor said, the President seldom gave him any orders regarding campaign activities because the campaign was running smoothly and the polls showed Mr. Nixon far ahead.

At the June 30, 1972, meeting, MacGregor said Mr. Nixon assured him that he could rely on statements issued by the White House and re-election committee that no top official at the White House or the committee had advance knowledge of the Watergate break-in.

MacGregor said Mr. Nixon also suggested at that meeting that Mitchell, although officially removed from the re-election committee, should retain responsibility in the cam-