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**Dean Story
Rebutted by
White House**

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The White House released yesterday a 29-page analysis showing what it said were "important contradictions" between the sworn testimony of former White House counsel John W. Dean III during last summer's Senate select Watergate committee hearings and the edited White House transcripts released last Tuesday.

The analysis focuses on seven different meetings held between President Nixon and Dean between Sept. 15, 1972, and April 16, 1973, charging that in his testimony Dean made false statements, omitted information and gave incorrect dates for discussions he had with Mr. Nixon on aspects of the Watergate affair.

The thrust of the White House statement and the analysis it accompanies is to challenge Dean's testimony that Mr. Nixon was aware of the Watergate cover-up long before Dean discussed the cover-up with him on March 21, 1973. Dean testified last summer that he had discussed the cover-up with President Nixon for the first time on Sept. 15, 1972, aspects of it in early 1973 and in detail on March 21.

President Nixon has said repeatedly he had no knowledge of the cover-up before the March 21 meeting.

The Sept. 15 meeting is scrutinized most closely in the analysis, with seven of

See DEAN, A10, Col. 1

DEAN, From A1

the 16 items in the document devoted to that meeting. "None of Mr. Dean's statements implying knowledge on Sept. 15 . . . is confirmed in the tape of Sept. 15," a statement accompanying the analysis asserted.

"Again," the White House statement said, "the significance of the earliest of these (tapes) is that the question, 'What did the President know and when did he know it,' was the focal point of the Watergate hearings. Mr. Dean contended presidential knowledge of, and involvement in that cover-up, based on what transpired in three meetings with the President. In none of those meetings can it be said that the tapes bear out what Mr. Dean testified to under oath."

In some instances, the analysis contradicts Dean's testimony concerning a conversation he testified he had had with Mr. Nixon on a particular date or a comment he had made. The analysis attacks Dean's testimony that he discussed executive clemency with Mr. Nixon on March 13. The analysis does not point out, however, that the transcripts show that Dean and Mr. Nixon discussed the subject on Feb. 28.

In other instances, the analysis quotes from the transcript but does not give the full context of the conversation.

The analysis has been under preparation since last Sunday or Monday, according to Ken W. Clawson, White House communications director. It is apparently part of a White House public relations campaign to capitalize on the release of the transcripts to back up President Nixon's assertion that "I had no knowledge of the cover-up until I was finally told about it by John Dean on March 21."

Dean, who had more than 35 meetings or conversations with Mr. Nixon between Feb. 27 and April 17,

1973, has reportedly told friends that in the Sept. 15, 1972, transcripts there are "major deletions" from his conversation with Mr. Nixon.

In addition, the transcripts contains numerous instances where remarks by Mr. Nixon and others are described as "unintelligible" or "inaudible." The transcripts also note in several meetings that "material unrelated to presidential action is deleted."

White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler gave first word on the analysis on the plane carrying Mr. Nixon from Phoenix, Ariz., to Spokane, Wash. Ziegler sharply disagreed with statements by Senate Watergate Committee chairman Sam J. Ervin (D-N.C.), Sen. Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.), and Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), who have said the transcripts tend to back up Dean.

"Anyone who says the transcripts support John Dean hasn't worked at his reading or is looking at it with a totally partisan or biased eye," Ziegler said. Dean, fired as White House counsel April 30 of last year, has become the President's chief accuser in the Watergate cover-up.

The first item in the White House analysis concerns Dean's Senate testimony that on Sept. 15, "The President then told me that Bob referring to (White House chief of staff H. R.) Haldeman—had kept him posted on my handling of the Watergate case."

The analysis cites two other variations by Dean of that statement, including one in which Dean said that he recalled "very clearly" that Mr. Nixon said Haldeman had kept Mr. Nixon "posted or made aware of my handling of the various aspects of the Watergate case. . ."

"All three statements are false," according to the White House analysis. "Nowhere in the tape of Sept. 15 does the President make any reference whatsoever to Bob Haldeman's having reported to him on John Dean's investigations or efforts in Watergate."

The transcript of the Sept. 15 meeting does, however, quote Mr. Nixon as telling Dean, "But the way you have handled all this seems to me has been very skillful, putting your fingers in the leaks that have sprung here and sprung there."

The analysis also disputes Dean's testimony that Mr. Nixon "expressed what

to me was a pleasure to the fact" that the Watergate indictments of seven men returned on Sept. 15 included no White House officials or Nixon re-election committee official above G. Gordon Liddy, the former general counsel to the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President.

"The statement is false," the analysis asserts. "The President never in this conversation in any way, expressed pleasure the case had stoppde with Liddy."

Similarly, the analysis disputes Dean's testimony that he told Mr. Nixon on Sept. 15 "that all I had been able to do was to contain the case and assist in keeping it out of the White House." The analysis cites three separate times in his testimony before the Watergate committee where Dean said he used the word "contained" on Sept. 15.

"According to the transcript of the tape of Sept. 15, John Dean never used the word 'contained,' never used the expression 'it has been contained,' never made any statement even similar to that," the White House analysis asserts.

The analysis does not cite the following exchange between Dean and Mr. Nixon on Sept. 15:

"Mr. Nixon: You really can't sit and worry about it all the time. The worst may happen, but it may not. So you just try to button it up as well as you can and hope for the best, and remember basically the damn business is unfortunately trying to cut our losses.

"Dean: Certainly that is right and certainly it has had no effect on you. That's the good thing.

"Haldeman: No, it has been kept a way from the White House and of course completely from the President."

The analysis also challenges as false Dean's testimony that he told Mr. Nixon "that I could not take credit because others had done much more difficult things than I had done."

Dean also testified on Sept. 15 he told Mr. Nixon, "I certainly could make no assurances that the day would come when this matter would start to unravel."

The analysis states that Dean's testimony "is 180 degrees from the truth," citing this excerpt from the Sept. 15 transcript:

"Dean: Three months ago I would have had trouble predicting there would be a day when this would be forgotten, but I think I can say that 54 days from now noth-



Photos by James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

John Dean's testimony analyzed for contradictions.

ing is going to come crashing down to our surprise."

Although Dean does not explain the significance of the 54 days, he apparently was referring to the Nov. 7 presidential election.

The analysis also asserts "that not a word of truth is contained" in Dean's testimony that Mr. Nixon "wanted to know when this matter (the Watergate indictment) was likely to come to trial" or that "the Justice Department had held off as long as possible the return of the indictments."

Dean also testified that on Sept. 15 he told Mr. Nixon that lawyers at the Committee for the Re-election of the President were very hopeful of slowing down the civil suit filed by the Democratic National Committee in connection with the Watergate break-in "because they (the lawyers) had been making ex parte contacts with the judge handling the case . . . The President was pleased to hear this and responded to the effect that, 'Well, that's helpful.'"

Dean repeated that testi-

mony several times while testifying.

"Mr. Dean's suggestion that the President greeted with pleasure a statement that improper contacts were being made with a federal judge turns out, on inspection of the tapes, to be false," the statement asserts. In addition, the analysis says that the transcripts show that Dean told Mr.

Nixon that the judge was making "entrees off the bench" rather than re-election committee lawyers approaching the judge.

The analysis also challenges Dean's testimony that he told Mr. Nixon on Feb. 28, 1973, that Dean had "legal problems" and that he could be involved in an obstruction of justice. "He (Nixon) would not accept my analysis and did not want me to get into it in any detail other than what I had just related. He assured me not to worry, that I had no legal problems," Dean testified.

The analysis cites one section from the Feb. 28 transcript as being Dean's briefing on obstruction of justice.

"Mr. Nixon: There is no question what they are after. What the (Senate) committee is after is somebody at the White House. They would like to get Haldeman or (special presidential counsel Charles W.) Colson, (top presidential adviser John D.) Ehrlichman.

"Dean: Or possibly Dean—You know, I am a small fish.

"Mr. Nixon: Anybody at the White House they would—but in your case I think they realize you are the lawyer and they know you didn't have a (adjective deleted) thing to with the campaign.

"Dean: That's right.

"Mr. Nixon: That's what I think. Well, we'll see.

"Dean: All right, sir, goodbye."

The analysis also disputes Dean's testimony that he discussed money demands being made by the Watergate defendants with Mr. Nixon on March 13. Dean, according to sources on the Senate committee, has conceded that his testimony on this point was incorrect, that

the discussion occurred on March 21.

The analysis also disputes Dean's testimony that he and Mr. Nixon discussed clemency on March 13. The analysis states, "The truth: The subject of clemency—contrary to John Dean's sworn testimony and his insistence—did not arise on March 13; no mention was made of it in the meeting."

The analysis does not, however, cite the following passage from the Feb. 28 transcript:

"Mr. Nixon: What the hell do they expect though? Do they expect clemency in a reasonable time? What would you advise on that?"

"Dean: I think it is one of those things we will have to watch very closely. For example—

"Mr. Nixon: You couldn't do it, say, in six months.

"Dean: No you couldn't. . . ."

Dean, contrary to his testimony, did not tell Mr. Nixon everything he knew about the Watergate cover-up on March 21, according to the analysis. Dean failed to mention that he had directed that an offer of clemency be made to Watergate conspirator James W. McCord Jr. and that Dean had shredded documents relating to the Watergate affair, the analysis states.

The transcript of the afternoon meeting of March 21 does not, according to the analysis, support Dean's testimony that he told Mr. Nixon for the first time in front of Haldeman and Ehrlichman that they and Dean were all indictable for obstruction of justice.

On March 22, contrary to Dean's testimony, according to the analysis, Mr. Nixon told Dean to write a report about the Watergate affair.

The analysis quotes a portion of the transcript were

Mr. Nixon tells Dean, "I want a written report."

In discussing the report, the transcript shows, Mr. Nixon told Dean, "It is a negative in setting forth general information involving questions. Your consideration—your analysis, et cetera. You have found this, that. Rather than going into every news story and every charges, et cetera, et cetera."

Finally, in two separate meetings with Mr. Nixon on April 16, the analysis states, the transcripts show that, contrary to Dean's testimony, Dean did not refuse to sign two letters of resignation Mr. Nixon gave him.

In the second meeting, Dean testified that Mr. Nixon read a draft resignation Dean proposed—including Haldeman and Ehrlichman—and said "it wasn't what he wanted. The analysis states that Mr. Nixon "expressed no opinion on the letter whatsoever."

The analysis appears to be House strategy to make Dean's testimony against President Nixon the central focus in the pending impeachment proceedings in the House Judiciary Committee.

White House communications director Clawson has arranged audiences with presidential counselor Dean Burch and special presidential Watergate lawyer James D. St. Clair for syndicated columnists, White House regular correspondents and other groups.

"When thoughtful journalists have had an opportunity to discuss and digest the transcripts," Clawson said, "we are sure they will come to the same conclusion we have.

"The gist of their reaction will be that, sure, the President thought about a lot of things and talked about a lot of things, but when it came down to the nut-cutting, he acted properly."