

# White House Puzzled by Query About Transcript

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WASHINGTON, May 7—The White House said today that it was "at a loss" to explain an apparent discrepancy in the transcript of one of the recorded conversations turned over last week to the House Judiciary Committee, which is studying the possible impeachment of President Nixon.

The New York Times reported today that although the transcript notes that the meeting last year, between Mr. Nixon and several of his aides, lasted from 1:57 until 3:43 o'clock in the afternoon, the last time of the transcripts includes the comment that "it is 3:16" o'clock.

After examining the conflict, a White House spokesman conceded that "we do not know at this time" the explanation for it. "We're at a loss, but we're trying to figure something out," he said.

Another White House official who studied the 27-minute discrepancy today acknowledged, however, that "there very possibly could have been some error in the logs" that were maintained of the President's meeting by the White House staff.

## Only 'Conjective'

Both the Judiciary Committee and the special Watergate prosecutor have asked the White House for such logs as an aid to their investigation of the Watergate cover-up and the possible involvement of the President in the alleged conspiracy.

The official emphasized that it was only his "conjecture" that the explanation for the discrepancy lay in an error in the written log of the meeting's

duration, rather than in any possible excision in the transcript or the tape from which it was made.

But he pointed out that the House committee and Leon Jaworski, the special prosecutor, had possessed for several months the tape recordings of the meeting on March 22, 1973, and he speculated that, if any sign of tampering with the recording had been found, "I would guess there would have been a hearing or something else."

The official added that his suspicion that the meeting actually ended at 3:16 o'clock was consistent with the notation, in a separate log of the President's telephone calls kept by the White House switchboard, that Mr. Nixon had called a "foreign leader" at 3:28 o'clock that same afternoon.

## Those at Meeting

Although he had no way of knowing for certain, the official said, he believed that "that call would not have been placed in the presence of" the Nixon aides who had attended the meeting in question.

According to the transcript, Mr. Nixon was joined during the meeting by H. R. Haldeman, then his chief of staff; John D. Ehrlichmann, then his top domestic adviser; John W. Dean 3d, then his counsel, and former Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

It was Mr. Ehrlichman who made the comment at the end of the transcript that the time was 15 minutes past 3 o'clock.

Both the office of the special prosecutor and the House Judiciary Committee have declined comment on the apparent discrepancy.

The March 22 meeting was

held in President Nixon's so-called "hideaway" office in the old Executive Office Building next to the White House, and the official pointed out that the system of logging Mr. Nixon's meetings there was not as sophisticated as at his Oval Office, where the task is handled by the staff of the appointments secretary.

The official also responded to a second apparent discrepancy reported in today's Times that concerned the length of a meeting on April 14 of last year between the President Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman.

At one point during the discussion, the President asked the time of an aide to whom he was speaking on the telephone.

"Put that thing with Haig," the transcript shows that Mr. Nixon said to Steve Bull, his appointments secretary. "What time you got now? Quarter after?" Eight pages later, Mr. Haldeman is quoted as observing that "it is 11 o'clock."

The official agreed that the intervening transcript represented only about 10 minutes of conversation. But he said he believed that Mr. Nixon's response to Mr. Bull, whose side of the conversation is unheard, did not reflect the time of day but rather of an upcoming appointment with Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., then one of his national security advisers, scheduled for 11:15 o'clock that morning.