

NYTimes JUL 2 5 1974 JUL 2 5 1974
**Ex-Aide Depicts Nixon
As Attentive to Details**

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 24—President Nixon was depicted by a former aide in testimony released today as being almost obsessive about trivial administrative matters and "very, very much in charge" of what went on in the White House.

Alexander P. Butterfield, who served for more than four years as deputy assistant to Mr. Nixon, told the House Judiciary Committee three weeks ago that the President's far-reaching concern extended to such minor issues as whether the secret servicemen would salute during the playing of the National Anthem during official ceremonies and whether salad would be served at state dinners.

Most of the President's concerns, Mr. Butterfield testified, were relayed to the White House personnel by H. R. Haldeman, the former chief of staff who has been directly linked in previous testimony to the Watergate cover-up.

'The Alter Ego'

"Haldeman was the alter ego," Mr. Butterfield testified. "Haldeman was almost the other President. I can't emphasize that enough."

Asked whether he knew of any occasion when Mr. Haldeman withheld information from the President, Mr. Butterfield responded, "No sir, none."

"I did not know Mr. Haldeman to be a decision maker," Mr. Butterfield added a moment later. "He was entirely, in my view, an implementer. I can hardly recall the decisions, any decisions that he made, unless that it was that the White House staff mess personnel would wear jackets or something along that line."

"He implemented the President's decisions. The President was the decision maker. The President was 100 per cent in charge."

Mr. Butterfield, who is now head of the Federal Aviation Administration, specifically took issue later in his day-long testimony with what he said was the impression stemming from the edited White House transcripts that Mr. Nixon was not in charge.

"That is erroneous," the former Nixon aide said. "He was very, very much in charge and everyone in that office was aware of it and you do not get that impression from those transcripts."

Denials by Nixon

The thrust of Mr. Butterfield's testimony was depicted by many committee members to be damaging to Mr. Nixon's denials that he was unaware of the high-level White House planning behind the decision to coverup the Watergate break-in.

Under cross-examination from James D. St. Clair, Mr. Nixon's Watergate attorney, Mr. Butterfield acknowledged that he was rarely directly involved in Mr. Haldeman's conversations with the President and thus was making "a judgment" about Mr. Haldeman's role in keeping the President fully informed.

"But my judgment is a good

one," Mr. Butterfield insisted as Mr. St. Clair questioned him sharply, "and I was close enough to have a judgment on that matter."

As deputy assistant to Mr. Nixon, Mr. Butterfield explained, his function was to serve as an immediate back-up from Mr. Haldeman as chief of staff. He testified that often, when Mr. Haldeman was away, he would coordinate the running of the White House.

Re-election Role Cited

Mr. Butterfield further testified, as have other witnesses, that President Nixon was firmly in control of the White House in re-election campaigns. Mr. Nixon has said that, through the press of foreign affairs, he took no direct role in his re-election campaign two years ago. Repeatedly Mr. Nixon has declared that the June, 1972, Watergate break-in would not have taken place if he had been more involved in his re-election campaign.

"He made the big decisions, of course," Mr. Butterfield testified about the campaign. "Anything having to do with strategy would emanate from the President and be carried to the committee via Haldeman and Gordon Strachan." Mr. Haldeman and Gordon C. Strachan, a former Haldeman aide, have been indicted in the Watergate cover-up and face trial in September.

Much of Mr. Butterfield's testimony was taken up with a description of the personnel and practices of the Nixon White House, with its emphasis on management and paper flow. He said that only a few White House aides had direct access to Mr. Nixon, and that others routed their requests through Mr. Haldeman's office or aides.

Mr. Butterfield estimated that Mr. Haldeman saw the President at least seven times as much as other aides, including his former national security adviser, Henry A. Kissinger, and John D. Ehrlichman. Mr. Ehrlichman, a former key domestic aide to the President, also was indicted in the Watergate cover-up.

Mr. Butterfield, who told the Senate Watergate Committee last summer about the previously secret White House taping system, testified at length about Mr. Nixon as "a detail man."

Before giving an extensive list of examples of the President's concerns, the former aide told the committee members that "I hope you understand I don't say them at all in a derogatory manner; in fact, quite the contrary."

He then proceeded to describe Mr. Nixon as being involved in such mundane matters as how fast state dinners could be served, whether the tables should be round or U-shaped, whether curtains should be opened or closed, whether receiving lines should be held before or after the entertainment.

"He was very interested in whether or not salad should be served," Mr. Butterfield testified, "and decided that at

small dinners of eight or less, the salad course should not be served."

He reviewed guest lists, paid close attention to the press coverage of social events and, Mr. Butterfield said, expressed interest in whether ceremonies "should be public on the south grounds or whether we should have only administrative personnel; the details of the drive up the walkway, whether the military would be to the left or right, which uniforms would be worn by the White House police, whether or not the Secret Service would salute during the Star-Spangled Banner and sing, where the photographer would be, and such things as that."

There were other interests cited by Mr. Butterfield:

"He spent a lot of time on gifts—gifts for Congressional leaders, gifts for people who came into the Oval Office. He actually looked at inventories of cuff links and ash trays and copies of 'Six Crises' [a political biography Mr. Nixon wrote] and such things as that."

"He was interested in wines. He wanted me to find out the best Bourdeaux-type California wines, the best German wines, the best vintages."

"He was interested in the plants in the south grounds and whether or not we should retain the tennis court or move. Memorandums went on about the tennis court for over a year's time."

"He even did a memorandum in Yugoslavia and Belgrade [after] having been impressed by the fine restrooms along the way there, and having the feeling that back here on the mall we had some rather shabby wooden restrooms."

"He was interested in whether or not we should have a P.O.W. [prisoner of war] wife or another to be the receptionist in the west lobby. He debated this point a number of times and issued instructions with regard to who the receptionist would be and how she would operate."

All of these thoughts, Mr. Butterfield testified, were captured in White House memorandums because the President "seemed to me to be preoccupied with his place in history, with his Presidency as history would see it."