

Nixon Ordered That the F.B.I. Be Told: 'Don't Go Any Further Into This Case'

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By JOHN M. CREWDSON

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 5—Six days after the Watergate break-in, President Nixon, informed that his campaign director had urged the illegal bugging operation, ordered that the Federal Bureau of Investigation be told: "Don't go any further into this case!"

The remark was made by Mr. Nixon in the Oval Office during a meeting on June 23, 1972, with H. R. Haldeman, then his chief of staff. A transcript of the conversation, recorded at the time, was one of three made public by the President today.

The transcripts of the conversations, all with Mr. Haldeman on June 23, contradict in

detail what the President was saying publicly about his knowledge of Watergate in the summer of 1972 and his later statement of noninvolvement in the cover-up of responsibility for the bugging.

According to the transcript of the recording, which had been withheld by Mr. Nixon from the House Judiciary Committee and the Watergate special prosecutor, Mr. Haldeman began the 90-minute meeting by telling the President that the F.B.I. "is not under control."

The agents, he told the President, had traced five checks that had been deposited two months earlier in the Florida bank account of Bernard L. Barker, one of the five burglars

arrested at the Democratic party's headquarters on June 17, 1972.

He also reported that the unsuccessful bugging and burglary operation had been carried out under "pressure" from John N. Mitchell, the former Attorney General and, at the time, the head of Nixon's re-election effort.

Agrees on Message

When Mr. Haldeman suggested that top officials of the Central Intelligence Agency be directed to tell the F.B.I. to stay out of the investigation of the checks, which had come to Mr. Barker from the Nixon campaign committee, Mr. Nixon replied, "right, fine."

"You call the mn," he added. "Play it tough. That's the way they [the Democrats] play it, and that's the way we are going to play it."

For more than two months after the June 23 conversations with Mr. Haldeman, the President remained silent on the Watergate matter.

Then on Aug. 22, 1972, in the midst of his re-election campaign, Mr. Nixon told reporters that he could say "categorically" that an investigation by John W. Dean 3d, then his counsel, "indicates that no one in the White House staff, no one in this Administration, presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident."

"What really hurts in matters of this sort," the President added, "is not the fact that they occur, because overzealous people in campaigns do things that are wrong. What really hurts is if you try to cover it

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up."

On June 23, about two hours after he received the President's go-ahead, Mr. Haldeman met with the C.I.A. director, Richard C. Helms, and Gen. Vernon A. Walters, the Deputy Director.

General Walters has testified that he was "ordered" by Mr. Haldeman to inform L. Patrick Gray 3d, the acting F.B.I. director, that unspecified C.I.A. activities in Mexico might be uncovered if the bureau pursued its investigation there.

Four of the five checks deposited in Mr. Barker's bank account and traced by the F.B.I. had been passed by a group of Republican fundraisers in Texas through the Mexico City bank account of Manuel Ogarrío Daguerre, a retired lawyer.

Another of the White House

transcripts released today contains the audible portions of a second meeting between Mr. Nixon and Mr. Haldeman on June 23, following the session with the two C.I.A. officials.

Mr. Haldeman told the President, the transcript shows, that he had instructed General Walters to pass the message to Mr. Gray, and that "he kind of got the picture."

Mr. Nixon's responses in the transcript are peppered with "unintelligible" passages. When Mr. Haldeman informed the President that "Walters is going to make a call to Gray," Mr. Nixon replied:

"How does that work though, how, they got to [unintelligible] somebody from the Miami bank." The apparent reference was to the Republic National Bank in Coral Gables, where Mr. Barker had had his account.

Following the August, 1972, news conference, the President continued to insist that he had not impeded the F.B.I.'s investigation of the Watergate reporters on Oct. 5, 1972, for example, he made the following remarks:

"I agreed with the amount of effort that was put into it. I wanted every lead carried out to the end because I wanted to be sure that no member of the White House staff and no man or woman in a position of major responsibility in the Committee for Re-election has anything to do with this kind or reprehensible activity."

During the morning meeting with Mr. Haldeman on the previous June 23, however, the transcript showed Mr. Nixon asking, "Well, what the hell, did Mitchell know about this?"

"I think so," Mr. Haldeman replied. "I don't think he knew the details, but I think he knew."

Mr. Haldeman then referred to G. Gordon Liddy, who had orchestrated the June 17 break-in, but who, at that time, had not been implicated in the matter and was still employed as council to the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President.

Mr. Haldeman told the President of Mr. Liddy's involvement, which was not known publicly until he was indicted with the burglars three months later, Mr. Liddy, he said "was under pressure, apparently, to get more information, and as he got more pressure, he pushed the people harder to move harder."

"Pressure from Mitchell?" the President inquired.

"Apparently," Mr. Haldeman replied.

"All right, fine. I understand

it all," the President said. "We won't second guess Mitchell and the rest. Thank God it wasn't Colson."

Charles W. Colson was then the special counsel to the President.

Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Colson and others were indicted by a Federal grand jury in connection with the Watergate cover-up last March. The charges against Mr. Colson were later dropped when he pleaded guilty to a felony charge brought in the Ellsberg break-in case.

Not Guilty Pleas

Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Mitchell have pleaded not guilty and are due to stand trial on Sept. 9. Mr. Haldeman has testified to his innocence in the matter, and told the Senate Watergate Committee last summer that he had instructed General Walters on June 23 only to investigate the possibility of C.I.A. involvement in Watergate.

The suggestion was made, he said, because Mr. Barker and some of the others arrested in the Democratic National Headquarters had been active in the C.I.A.'s Cuban invasion plan in 1961 that met defeat at the Bay of Pigs. One of the five, James W. McCord Jr., then the Nixon campaign security director, had served for 20 years as a security officer with the C.I.A.

General Walters told the committee that he did speak with Mr. Gray on June 23, but told him only that it was the wish of the White House that the F.B.I. "taper off" its investigation of the Mexican checks that Mr. Barker had deposited.

Three days later, the general testified, he called Mr. Gray back to report that none of the C.I.A.'s covert operations in Mexico would be compromised by a full-scale F.B.I. inquiry into the origin of the checks.

But General Walters said that Mr. Dean kept insisting that the C.I.A. was involved in Watergate. President Nixon's defense lawyers have repeatedly laid the responsibility for the genesis of the Watergate cover-up to Mr. Dean, who later became Mr. Nixon's principal accuser.

Mr. Nixon has said a number of times that he was unaware until March 21, 1973, when Mr. Dean warned him in an Oval Office conversation that a "cancer" was growing on the Presidency, that the cover-up had touched the White House.

Mr. Dean has charged that Mr. Nixon had some knowledge of the cover-up effort as early as Sept. 15, 1972, the day Mr.

Liddy, Mr. Barker and five others were indicted in the bugging case.

The Bay of Pigs invasion, according to the three newly released transcripts, appeared to be central in the President's mind to the rationale for limiting the F.B.I.'s investigation. In instructing Mr. Haldeman on what to tell Mr. Helms and General Walters, he remarked:

"When you get in—when you get in [unintelligible] people, say, 'Look the problem is that this will open the whole, the whole Bay of Pigs thing, and the President just feels that ah, without going into the details—don't, don't lie to them to the extent to say there is no involvement, but just say this is a comedy of errors . . .'"

One of those ultimately indicted in connection with the Watergate burglary was E. Howard Hunt Jr., who, like Mr. Liddy, had remained on the fringes on the night of the break-in. Mr. Hunt's involvement was not publicly known on June 23 either, but Mr. Nixon had apparently been informed that he was involved.

"This Hunt" he told Mr. Haldeman, "that will uncover a lot of things. You open that scab there's a hell of a lot of things and we just feel that it would be very detrimental to have this thing go any further."

Mr. Hunt had been a career C.I.A. operative with major responsibility for the failure of the Bay of Pigs effort, and, after retiring from the agency, he became a member of the "plumbers," the White House investigation squad that broke into the office of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's former psychiatrist.

The President, in a statement accompanying the three transcripts, noted that they contradicted his first major statement on Watergate on May 22, 1973.

In that statement, Mr. Nixon declared that "at no time did I attempt, or did I authorize others to attempt, to implicate the C.I.A. in the Watergate matter."

National Security

The transcripts show Mr. Haldeman reporting to the President on June 23 that he and Mr. Dean concurred with Mr. Mitchell's recommendation that directing the C.I.A. to invoke national security to limit the F.B.I. investigation was "the only way to solve this."

"That's right," Mr. Nixon replied.

In his May 22 statement, the President provided a different reconstruction of the events in the week following the

break-in.

"Within a few days" of the break-in attempt, he said, he "was advised that there was a possibility of C.I.A. involvement in some way."

The President recalled his concern at the time with "insuring that neither the covert operations of the C.I.A. nor the operations of the special investigation unit [the White House term for the 'plumbers'] should be compromised."

He had instructed Mr. Haldeman, he went on, to make certain that that not happen. But, he maintained, "it was

certainly not my intent, nor my wish, that the investigation of the Watergate break-in or of related acts be impeded in any way."

Mr. Nixon conceded on May 22 that it then seemed that, "through whatever complex of individual motives and possible misunderstandings, there were apparently wide-rangnig efforts to limit the investigation, or to conceal the possible involvement of members of the Administration and the campaign committee."

"I was not aware of any such efforts at the time," he said,