

illegal wiretaps. But when President Nixon and his security advisor Henry Kissinger asked Hoover to tap the phones of a number of government employees who were suspected of leaking highly classified information to the press, the director quickly agreed.

I knew nothing of Hoover's meetings with Nixon and Kissinger until Alexander Haig, then a colonel working on Kissinger's staff, came to my office on 10 May 1969. I had never met Haig. Without mentioning any names, and making sure that I understood that he was merely acting as a messenger in this affair, Colonel Haig told me that he had been instructed to convey a "White House request" on "the highest authority." Security leaks, Haig explained, with honest concern in his voice, had been plaguing the Nixon administration for some time. Members of the National Security Council could read about their secret meetings in the *New York Times* forty-eight hours after the meetings took place. Newspaper stories on the most sensitive aspects of our foreign policy were almost commonplace. These leaks, Haig told me, were incredibly damaging to our bargaining position at the Paris peace talks. Indeed, they were damaging to our foreign policy as a whole, and they had to be stopped. How? By tapping the telephones of the men the White House suspected of leaking the information to the press. Haig explained that the wiretap program would be short lived—I remember him saying that the whole thing would take "a few days"—and he requested that because of the sensitivity of the operation, no written record of the program ever be made.

Haig obviously knew nothing about how taps were handled, so I told him that it would be impossible for the FBI to implement a totally secret wiretap operation with no written records. A single tap, I told Haig, would involve a minimum of two men for installation alone. The head of the office involved would know about the "secret tap," as would the people needed to monitor the information coming in. If twenty-four-hour monitoring was required, at least four people would be involved at that end. At least one typist would have to prepare the transcripts. That added up to a *minimum* of eight people who would know about the simplest single tap. No tap could be kept completely secret within the bureau, but I did tell Haig that I would

try to keep the paperwork involved to a minimum by meeting with him personally whenever there was anything to report instead of writing memos back and forth. Haig was a career army man, as familiar as I was with bureaucracy and red tape, and he accepted what I said without argument. Before he left, Haig gave me the names of four men. One of them was that of Morton Halperin, a member of the National Security Council.

As soon as Haig walked out of my office, I was on the phone to Hoover. He wasn't in the office (it was a Saturday), but Helen Gandy, his secretary, made a record of my call and of the fact that I wouldn't move on Haig's request until I'd gotten the director's approval. The next day I finally got through to Hoover and told him about Haig's request, which he approved. His justification, he told me, was national security. He also told me that Attorney General John Mitchell had already approved the taps. Later that day, I wrote a memo to the director advising that he handle the taps with extreme caution. I'd had a funny feeling about the wiretaps from the first. I sensed that this program could be dangerous and I wanted to alert Hoover to any possible danger.

Although Haig sincerely believed that the wiretap program would be short lived, it lasted for almost two years. During that time we tapped the telephones of four journalists, including Hedrick Smith and Tad Szulc of the *New York Times*, and of thirteen government employees, although not all seventeen wiretaps were operational at the same time.

Despite Haig's initial request for no paperwork, with so many taps in effect for so long, the logs (the tape transcripts), correspondence, and memos began to pile up. Hoover instructed me to keep this material *out* of the FBI files. This was not unusual; to my knowledge, particularly sensitive material had been kept out of the files since the 1940s. In this case, at least at first, the material was kept in Hoover's own office.

The paperwork started as soon as Hoover approved the White House request. I told the director that it was my judgment that these taps should be handled in the same manner as other wiretaps, that an individual letter should be prepared on each tap for his approval and for the approval of the attorney general. Hoover agreed, but he

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In December of 1970 I again suggested to Hoover that the logs go into the bureau files. Again Hoover refused. And when I called him in February of 1971 to tell him that Haig had informed me that the White House had finally called off the taps, Hoover still wanted me to keep the logs in my office. I hated being responsible for such sensitive material. It was the only time in my career with the FBI that I had been saddled with such a job, though plenty of secret material had been kept out of our files in the past, especially for Lyndon Johnson.

The situation between myself and the director had been getting worse and worse during this period, and when I was forced to resign from the FBI in October 1971, I felt I couldn't leave Washington without doing something about the wiretap logs. I couldn't help thinking of the way Hoover had abused sensitive material in the past—with these logs in his possession he could blackmail Nixon *and* Kissinger and hang onto his job forever. Even though Haig had conveyed the original requests for the wiretaps, I didn't feel I knew him well enough to turn to him. The only man in the Nixon administration who I actually knew and held high in regard was Assistant Attorney General Robert C. Mardian.

I had never heard of Mr. Mardian until I read the newspaper stories about his appointment to the job of assistant attorney general in charge of the Internal Security Division of the Department of Justice. I wasn't really interested in the stories though—to my mind, men like Mardian came and went with the wind.

At first I had no direct dealings with Mardian. I was used to getting along without the cooperation of the Internal Security Division. Mardian's predecessor was a former FBI man who had worked briefly for me, but he had great difficulty preparing and prosecuting cases.

Sometime after Mr. Mardian took over the job, my men came to tell me that an intelligent, capable man now headed the Internal Security Division. Mardian, they said, was a real fireball: a hard-worker who went after results. He was getting rid of the deadheads and replacing them with bright, talented, industrious young lawyers. My