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Kissinger Wanted Halperin To Stay On at NSC Post

By Nicholas M. Horrock
New York Times News Service

Three months after Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger suggested that the FBI wiretap his then-national security aide, Morton Halperin, as a potential security risk he was recorded on the tap pleading with Halperin to remain in government, FBI documents disclosed yesterday.

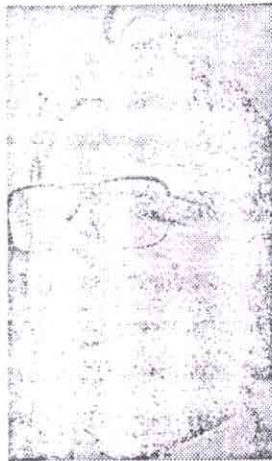
The documents, filed in U.S. District Court here, were part of a series of FBI internal memoranda and letters from J. Edgar Hoover, then director, to Kissinger, who was President Richard M. Nixon's assistant for national security affairs, a post he still retains.

The evidence was surrendered by the government in a lawsuit pressed by Halperin. He was wiretapped by the FBI on Kissinger's suggestion both while serving in the government and after he resigned and returned to private life. The tap was placed on Halperin's private telephone at his home in suburban Maryland.

IN THIS most recent filing, submitted this week, is a series of letters that the FBI used to report to Kissinger on what it found out after placing the wiretap on Halperin's telephone. By and large the references to specific conversations are brief and in many cases inconsequential.

For instance, the FBI reported to Kissinger that Halperin's wife had told a cemetery lot salesman and several women callers that her husband was working on Nixon's Vietnam speech. It reported on a conversation in which Daniel Ellsberg, who later made public the Pentagon papers, discussed "trips" which the FBI concluded were drug trips.

The FBI technique in these cases was to record the conversation and then reduce the material to summary form that became



MORTON HALPERIN
Tapped, then wooed

part of a "log" of the calls over the tapped phone. Most of the summaries were brief. But apparently the bureau felt a call from Kissinger to Halperin placed at 3:43 p.m. on Aug. 9, 1969, was worthy of fuller attention. It prepared a four-page summary of that call, but there is no indication the bureau ever sent the summary to Kissinger.

HALPERIN SAID in an interview that he believed the call covered in the Aug. 9 summary had been made by Kissinger shortly after Halperin had told him he planned to resign from the NSC and join the staff of the Brookings Institution.

"Kissinger praises Halperin's work as being extraordinary for him (Kissinger)," the FBI summary said. "Kissinger would like to make a major effort to find something satisfactory and if not 'Halperin' could always go to Brookings."

At another point the summary notes, "it was strongly stated by Kissinger that Halperin had a damned frustrating position there and some of my operators have behaved very poorly." Kissinger wants Halperin to know that his work was

'certainly the most creative of anyone on the staff,' and he doesn't want to give up on that without a struggle."

THE SUMMARY QUOTES Kissinger as saying he would talk to the attorney general, John N. Mitchell, and the President about trying to work out something to "satisfy" Halperin.

The summary ends with another call Halperin made to a friend and colleague on the NSC in which he discussed the offer made by Kissinger.

The original tap, FBI records have confirmed, was placed on Halperin's telephone on May 9, 1969. It remained there until February 1971. This was nine months after he left government service. The FBI recorded conversations he had after leaving government, including some while he was advising Sen. Edmund S. Muskie, D-Maine, who was seeking the Democratic presidential nomination.

HALPERIN WAS NEVER formally charged with compromising national security as a result of the 21 months of telephone taps and physical surveillance.

In these most recent court filings, the government surrendered photographs taken by a hidden FBI camera of Halperin and Henry O. Brandon, Washington correspondent of the Sunday Times of London, as they left the Occidental restaurant on Aug. 9. It was after this luncheon that Halperin received the call from Kissinger at his home.

Kissinger has testified that the taps were authorized by Nixon. Seventeen persons were wiretapped during the 21-month period. Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., who was Kissinger's deputy at the time, has testified in a deposition that Kissinger selected Halperin to be wiretapped.