

Kissinger chose taps—Nixon

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WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Richard M. Nixon said under oath that it was Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger who selected the list of persons who were wiretapped without court order early in his presidency.

Nixon's statement, made in a sworn deposition filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court, appears to contradict Kissinger, who said Nixon made the initial decision on whose phones would be tapped in an attempt to stop news leaks.

"I of course did not select the names myself because I did not know the individuals," Nixon said in the deposition taken at his San Clemente, Calif., home on Jan. 15. "I told Dr. Kissinger that he should inform Mr. Hoover of any names that he considered to be prime suspects." J. Edgar Hoover then was director of the FBI.

"That was Dr. Kissinger's responsibility. It was his responsibility not to control the surveillance program but solely to furnish the information to Mr. Hoover. Mr. Hoover then was to take it from there ..." Nixon said.

The former president also said he never instructed that former White House aide Morton Halperin be tapped, in fact had no memory of Halperin's name coming up as the target of surveillance. Kissinger said Nixon gave specific approval for a Halperin wiretap.

Kissinger has said that "while Nixon's authorization was in general terms and not limited to specific individuals, my understanding was that he then directed surveillance of Morton Halperin and certain others."

Asked about the Nixon deposition Wednesday, Kissinger declined specific comment except to question whether Nixon disputed taking part in the selection of Halperin as one of those to be tapped.

"First of all, I don't think this is an accurate representation of what either of us said and it is not a matter I propose to discuss as long as it is before the courts," Kissinger said.

Halperin, a former national security aide, was one of 17 persons wiretapped. He and four others are suing Nixon, Kissinger, other White House aides and the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. for damages up to \$3 million.

By Kissinger's account, Hoover suggested four names, including Halperin, former White House aide Anthony Lake and London Times reporter Henry Brandon, at a White House meeting April 25, 1969.