

Taps Data Improper, Nixon Feels

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Former President Nixon now believes the FBI improperly reported political information to the White House from the 1969-1971 wiretap of former National Security Council aide Morton Halperin, according to a deposition by Nixon.

Nixon, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and others are defendants in a suit brought by Halperin that seeks cash damages for the tap and any improper use of information gathered from it.

Nixon, in a deposition last Jan. 15, had authorized the 1969 wiretaps originally as a means to uncover news leaks.

One of the counts of impeachment the House Judiciary Committee brought against Nixon was for White House use of the Halperin and other wiretaps to gather political information.

In his deposition, Nixon said that while he was President he never saw the FBI reports that contain what he calls political information.

Nixon said a December 29, 1969, FBI report on an overheard conversation about Clark Clifford writing a magazine article was not a proper subject for the FBI to be informing the White House on . . .

A June 23, 1970, Hoover letter to Nixon's chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, reported on Halperin's agreement to contact Republican Senate offices to press for votes against the war in Cambodia. "I would not consider that [report] as consistent" with the purpose of the Halperin wiretap, Nixon said.

A Nov. 13, 1970, FBI letter



MORTON HALPERIN



HENRY A. KISSINGER



J. EDGAR HOOVER

. . . plaintiff in wiretap suit, defendant and late FBI director.

disclosed Halperin had discussed the names of foreign policy advisers working for Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine). Asked if that report fit the purposes of the Halperin wiretap, Nixon responded: "No and it was not requested, as far as I know."

A survey of other FBI reports on the Halperin tap, filed in the lawsuit, discloses a variety of questionable information was reported to the White House.

The FBI, for example, often reported gossip and criticisms about Nixon administration officials that were overheard.

Within days after the tap was installed, Halperin's wife's statement to a friend that Halperin "has Henry Kissinger's ear" was reported along with her remark that "they [referring to the Nixon Administration] make up lies to tell to the press."

A Halperin friend, using the phone, was reported telling a Washington lawyer that Halperin was "three times as good as Henry Kissinger" and "the only one of quality in there," meaning the National Security Council.

In August, 1969, Halperin was considering resigning from his NSC job because the mistrust of others limited what he could do for Kissinger.

An Aug. 6 conversation with his wife about his job was recorded by the FBI and sent to the White House. "He indicated he was interested in staying if he could be made a 'deputy' with his own area of responsibility . . ." the FBI reported.

Three days later, Halperin and Kissinger discussed his job future over the phone and again the call was recorded by the FBI. Kissinger said he would have to confer with Nixon and then Attorney General John N. Mitchell to see "if they feel we can't tailor something right now" for Halperin.

On Sept. 19, 1969, Halperin left the NSC staff, but remained a consultant.

Two weeks later, Hoover reported to the White House, Halperin said on his phone that "he was to meet with the foreign editor of Pravda."

A week later, a report called attention to Halperin saying "he was to spend an hour with Kennedy's Vietnam man, as Kennedy is giving a speech on the 15th. He was probably referring to Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.)," Hoover's report concluded.

On May 4, 1970, Hoover reported on a conversation with "an unidentified individual" in which Halperin "was extremely critical of

the invasion of Cambodia and said that the Attorney General was an ignoramus."

In the same reported conversation, Halperin agreed that the caller could tell an aide to Sen. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.) that "he will help him any way he can."

Four days later, another Hoover report concerned continued Halperin activity in forming a group to "focus on Vietnam."

A May 11, 1970, report recorded Halperin phone conversations about his resignation as an NSC consultant. "He said he was not going to make a press release . . . He told this individual that he could feel free to mention the fact he was resigning to anyone in the press."

The next day, according to FBI reports, Hoover visited Nixon at the White House and spoke of the "considerable information [received] through these installations."

Among the items pointed out to Nixon, the FBI report said, was "Halperin planned to resign to protest the invasion of Cambodia . . . and agreed to work with Sen. Fulbright in opposing the war."

The Halperin tap also provided information on Daniel Ellsberg.