

EX-NIXON WRITER REPORTED TAPPED

Safire Is Said to Have Been
Among 13 Surveilled

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 4—The Nixon Administration ordered a telephone wiretap on William Safire, when he was one of the President's three speechwriters, as part of a two-year effort to find and stop leaks of classified Government information to the press, according to Federal officials.

One official said that wiretap was installed sometime between May, 1969, and February, 1971, and was one of 13 "national security" surveillances on Administration officials authorized by Mr. Nixon. Mr. Safire is now a columnist for The New York Times.

Officials previously identified as having been wiretap targets were affiliated with the National Security Council, headed by Henry A. Kissinger, Mr. Nixon's national security adviser.

Mr. Kissinger said in a telephone interview yesterday that, although he had "provided some of the names" of individuals suspected as security leaks, Mr. Safire's was not among them.

Kissinger Comments

"It is inconceivable to me that Safire was part of it Mr. Kissinger said. But Mr. Kissinger conceded that he could not be certain because he had not recommended all the names.

Besides the 13 wiretaps placed on Government officials suspected of leaks, four were directed at newsmen, including two reporters of The New York Times, who were believed to be receiving classified national security information.

One Federal law-enforcement official, noting that logs of the overhead conversations compiled by the F.B.I. were sent routinely to Mr. Kissinger's office, said it was "inconceivable" to him that Mr. Kissinger could not have known of the tap on Mr. Safire.

Mr. Safire is the first White House official to be identified as a wiretap target. Gerald L. Warren, the deputy White House press secretary, said yesterday, "We've made it a practice not to comment on this situation, and we wouldn't care to discuss this either."

Asked why he might have been regarded as a potential security leak, Mr. Safire said that in writing speeches for Mr. Nixon, he had seen "a lot of top-secret, eyes-only stuff" on national security and foreign policy.