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Watergate Papers-- 'Alterations' Probe

Washington

The FBI is investigating the possibility that some Watergate documents submitted by the White House to Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski were altered, it was learned yesterday.

One memorandum on White House stationery, obtained by Jaworski, has two paragraphs cut from the second page, as if by scissors, according to knowledgeable sources.

To investigate suspected tampering with this and other documents, the FBI has sought official White House logs, dating back many months, to see who had access to Watergate-related files and who may have photocopied such files, the sources said.

The FBI inquiry, undertaken at Jaworski's request, was thwarted for a time by White House officials who refused to provide the agency with some of the logs it wanted to examine, these sources said. The FBI now has been given all the logs it

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wants to see, an administration official said.

It could not be learned precisely how many documents are believed to have been tampered with, or what areas of Jaworski's overall Watergate inquiry they relate to.

Asked to confirm the existence of such an investigation, FBI spokesman George Quinn referred all questions to Jaworski's office. An aide to Jaworski said: "We have no comment whatsoever."

Presidential press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said: "The White House has been, and continues to cooperate fully with the FBI on any investigation that they're undertaking."

Ziegler declined to answer further questions.

One source said the apparent alteration of some documents may have occurred at

an early date, even before the appointment last year of Archibald Cox, Jaworski's predecessor, who was fired by President Nixon on October 20 after five months in office.

He based his statement on what he called "a very clumsy job" of some alterations, saying they appear to have been done hurriedly by someone who believed the documents would never be provided as evidence to prosecutors.

This source, as well as an-

other, cited the evidence as a White House memo that left the second page -- cut from the top -- shorter in length than the first.

This document, after beginning with an introduction, was said to continue with a paragraph numbered "3," indicating that the first two paragraphs had been cut away. The subject matter of the memo could not be learned.

A high administration official, stressing he had no specific knowledge of any altered documents, suggested that if any alterations have been found they could have occurred prior to last April 30.

That was the date Mr. Nixon announced the resignations of his top assistants, H.R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, and fired John W. Dean III as his counsel.

The files of these officials were subsequently locked up and placed under guard at the White House.

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