

NIXON IS SECLUDED AS HE CONSIDERS WATERGATE MOVE

Key Advisers Stay in Capital
While the President Visits
Camp David Retreat

PAPER TERMED FORGERY

Document Said to Show
Kennedy Complicity in Diem
Murder Linked to Hunt

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 28 —

President Nixon was reported to be in "virtual seclusion" today at his mountaintop retreat at Camp David, Md., pondering his course of action amid the mounting Watergate bugging controversy.

The President, who canceled a scheduled meeting with his economic advisers before leaving the capital last night, took with him only his personal aides.

Both H. R. Haldeman, his chief of staff, and John D. Ehrlichman, his domestic affairs adviser, who usually accompany Mr. Nixon on such trips, stayed behind in Washington.

Appointment Questioned

Neither accompanied the President on his trip to Key Biscayne White House last week, but the two advisers joined him on a day-long visit to Mississippi yesterday.

There were no indications that Mr. Nixon was preparing to make any public announcement or take other action this weekend in connection with the Watergate affair.

Mr. Nixon has been in seclusion for much of the time since he announced on April 17 that he had begun his own investigation of the case. Justice Department sources have indicated that no indictments can be expected for at least a few days.

Meanwhile, Senator William Proxmire, Democrat of Wisconsin, said that William D. Ruckelshaus, named yesterday to succeed L. Patrick Gray 3d, as acting head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, could

serve legally beyond May 26 only "if his name has been submitted to the Senate for confirmation before that date."

Expects Short Term

The Senator cited an obscure Federal statute in support of his contention, but the Justice Department disagreed with his interpretation when he raised the same point in connection with Mr. Gray a few weeks ago.

Mr. Ruckelshaus said yesterday that he did not expect to serve "much longer" than about two months" before a permanent director of the F.B.I. could be nominated.

In another development, a former reporter who was given a document purported to be a State Department cable showing the complicity of the Kennedy Administration in the murder of President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam said today that he had learned the document was a forgery.

The reporter, William G. Lambert, who yesterday released the text of the document, said in a telephone interview today that he had "established to my

Continued on Page 43, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

satisfaction through confidential sources" that the document, shown him more than a year ago by a White House aide, had been fabricated.

Hunt's Papers Destroyed

"It is clear that the source who handed me the document and permitted me to make a handwritten verbatim copy was trying to use me to leak this phony thing," Mr. Lambert said from his home in Rye, N. Y.

Mr. Lambert, who worked for Life magazine before it closed earlier this year, refused to identify the aide who disclosed the fake cable to him, but The New York Times has learned that the source was E. Howard Hunt Jr., one of five men who pleaded guilty in the Watergate bugging and burglary case. Two others were convicted.

It was disclosed yesterday that on June 28, 1972—11 days after the Watergate break-in—John W. Dean 3d, President Nixon's counsel, handed what he has since said were "diplomatic cables forged by Hunt to L. Patrick Gray 3d, then the acting director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr. Gray has told friends that he had no knowledge of the contents of the two files given to him by Mr. Dean, who reportedly told him that although they were unrelated to the Watergate case, they con-

stituted "political dynamite" and "should never see the light of day."

Mr. Gray has said that he destroyed the files without opening them. He resigned his F.B.I. post a few hours after yesterday's disclosure of his actions.

Aides Reportedly Implicated

Mr. Dean has reportedly implicated Mr. Haldeman in efforts to cover over the bugging and espionage operation after it was exposed in June.

Mr. Ehrlichman has admitted being present at the time Mr. Dean handed Mr. Gray the files taken from Hunt's safe, but has denied knowing their contents or ordering their destruction.

Assistant Attorney General Henry E. Petersen, who is in charge of the Government's investigation of the Watergate affair, has reportedly told Mr. Gray that Mr. Dean maintained that the two files, each an eighth of an inch thick, contained "fabricated State Department cables relating to President Kennedy's complicity in Diem's assassination."

It is not known for certain whether the cable made available to Mr. Lambert by Hunt, who began work as a part-time White House consultant in July, 1971, was among those destroyed by Mr. Gray.

However, the cable was said to have been in Hunt's safe in the old Executive Office Building, next door to the White House, when it was opened on June 19 on orders from Mr. Dean.

Photocopies Shown

The forced cable, dated Oct. 29, 1963, was an "instruction" to Henry Cabot Lodge, the United States Ambassador in Saigon at the time, that President Diem should not be given political asylum if he was subsequently deposed.

President Diem was killed three days later during a coup d'état organized by a group of South Vietnamese army generals who acted with the blessing of President Kennedy.

Mr. Lambert said today that in late 1971 or early 1972, his source had shown him "about 50" photocopies of what appeared to be diplomatic messages relating to the deteriorating position of the Diem regime in the last half of 1963.

Some of the documents, he said, bore the stamped notation "Copy to the Kennedy Library," leading him to believe they may have been genuine. But the cable in question, which he said he was told had "turned up" during the White House investigation of the Pentagon papers, carried no such stamp.

Former Official Comment

Mr. Lambert said that it was addressed, "Ambassador Lodge — Eyes Only," and was signed by six White House and State Department officials, including McGeorge Bundy, who served at the time as special assistant

to President Kennedy for national security affairs. He said it was also stamped "Rusk."

Dean Rusk, the Secretary of

State in the Kennedy Administration, said yesterday that the document had never existed. Mr. Lodge said he had never received such a message, and Mr. Bundy now the president of the Ford Foundation, called it "total nonsense — the crudest kind of forgery."

Mr. Lambert said today that he learned of the document's existence in the fall of 1971, after he was advised by an unidentified source to re-read the text of a news conference by President Nixon on Sept. 16, 1971.

At that time, Mr. Nixon remarked that "... I would remind all concerned that the way we got into Vietnam was through over-throwing Diem and the complicity in the murder of Diem ...".

Questions Raised

"The question is," Mr. Lambert said, "how far did it [the bogus cable] go? Did it go to [Secretary of State William P.] Rogers? Did it go to Nixon? Were they misled by this thing? Did the President use it to base that strong statement on?"

A White House spokesman, asked today whether President Nixon's statement was founded in any way on the cable that Hunt was believed to have fabricated, replied after checking, "The answer is no."

When Hunt first joined the White House, he worked for a few weeks under Charles W. Colson, then a special counsel to Mr. Nixon, on a project aimed at determining the authenticity of the Pentagon papers, a secret Defense Department study of the Vietnam war that had been leaked to the press a month earlier. Mr. Colson resigned earlier this year.

According to sources close to Hunt, he worked for two other White House aides, Egil Krogh and David Young, who reported directly to Mr. Ehrlichman.

The sources have said that he was involved, under these two men, in a major research effort to demonstrate that the historical responsibility for the war in Vietnam, as shown in the By-then authenticated Pentagon papers, lay with the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations.

Hunt's superiors at the White House, the sources have asserted, "were concerned about the adverse reaction from the Pentagon papers on Nixon's political position and his negotiating position."

"If it could be shown and dramatized — remember that Hunt was a writer — that Nixon inherited all this Vietnam stuff from Kennedy and Johnson, it would strengthen Nixon's position."