Rogers Hits Obsession' On Security

By Murrey Marder Washington Post Staff Writer

Secretary of State William P. Rogers cautioned yesterday that the United States must not become "so obsessed with security matters that laws are freely violated" at the expense of individual liberties.

Rogers is the only survivor of the Nixon administration's original cabinet, and he is one of the President's closest long-time friends. For months he has avoided direct comment on the unusual Watergate practices undertaken in the name of extraordinary national security needs. Yesterday, in his first Washington press conference since Feb. 15, he put as much distance as possible between himself and Watergate, in response to newsman's questions. in response to newsmen's questions.

Despite prodding by newsmen, Rogers left open the increasingly recurring question of his own tenure as Secretary of State, which has been nourished by intensified speculation that presidential security adviser Henry A. Kissinger soon may be named to succeed him.

"However the President wants to run his foreign affairs and whom he wants to assign to certain tasks is up to him," said

Rogers blandly.

He pronounced himself "very happy to part I have played," in have played the part I have played," in the administration's "most successful" for-eign policy. All Rogers would say about his future was to refer reporters back to a statement made through his spokesman on Aug. 7 on two posts Rogers would "never" consider: a seat on the Supreme Court, or an ambassadorial appointment to Moscow, where the United States has been without an ambassador since January, or anywhere else.
Rogers, who served as Attorney Gen-

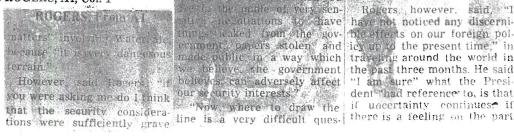
eral in the Eisenhower administration, prides himself on the fact that the State

Department has escaped any direct involvement in the Watergate scandals.

Although President Nixon has said that national security requirements during the first years of his administration were "so grave as to require extraordinary actions," Rogers was able to avoid, until yesterday, public comment on his own view of the security needs. Rogers did not disagree with the President's assessment, but his emphasis differed considerably.

He said yesterday that he would "hesitate" to "get into generalities and legal

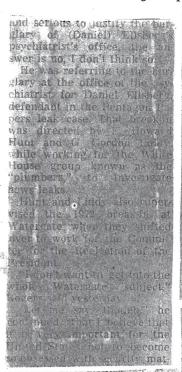
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Associated Press

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ly speaking. I lean towards strict observance of legal re-minimum at and only support a remaining to mithat in very unsual elecumstances To easy and man as Aftorney General. "I approved of wire-tage in a certain limited number of cases. All of those were exported to Congress." Con-cess was fully apprised of Telephone apping in national security gases said Rogerts. has been done by every bresident since Franklin D. Rogerell and there has always been a question about its legality. But he said be took the view as other attorneys general did that the President had that power.

Rogers said "I am not going

consequence of the Watergate standars.

President Nixon, last Wednesday aight, told the nation that confidence at home and abroad in our economy, our currency and our foreign policy is being sapped by uncertainty." tainty"

Rogers, however, said, "I Rosers however, said, "I have not noticed any discerni-ble effects on our foreign pol-icy up to the present time," in traveling around the world in the past three months. He said "I am sure" what the Presi-dent had reference to, is that uncertainty continues? if

of other nations that we will not have sufficient support from the American scople or from the Congress of the United States, that it could ad-versely affect our foreign pol-

icy and our foreign affairs."
"Up to the present time"
that has not happened, said
Rogers, but "the President is
certainly correct that if we are overly obsessed with the mat-

overly obsessed with the matters of Watergate, it could have adverse effects.

On other subjects Rogers said he was unaware of the dual reporting system on the clandestine. F-52 bombing in Cambodia from March,

comparatively optimistic view of the situation in Indochina.

"I am encourage, personally," said Rogers, "by the belief that the North Vietnamese have decided not to make ma-jor military efforts in South Vietnam." North Vietnam.

however, has yet to comply with all the terms of the Jan. 27 cease-tire agreement, including "an obligation to withdraw" its troops from Laos and Cambodia, he

"We have said to the North Vietnamese," said Rogers, Vietnamese," said Rogers, "that we are not about to come to any final agreement with them on assistance for (postwar) reconstruction and rehabilitation until the Haris neace agreements are imple-mented fully, and that basn'i occured yet."

Rogers officially announced

that Iran has agreed to re-place Canada on the international control commission estional control commission established by the Vietnam cease fire accord, if other nations involved concur. At though Canada pulled out of the commission despairing of any hope for effectively enforcing the cease-fire, Rogers said it is important to have the work continue. the work continue.

ing U.S. troops in Western Europe.

• There is "growing aware ness" that the situation in the Middle East is "unstable and could be dangerous" with only the existing Arab-Israeli cease fire. Blowing up planes and machine-gunning diplomats is "idiotie" and "somewhere along the line the voice of rea-son" must begin to produce a settlement, but Rogers offered no sign of specific encouragement.