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Kissinger's Ex-Aides Say

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Some former staff members of the National Security Council say Henry A. Kissinger ordered phone taps on aides and newsmen when Kissinger himself was the prime source of leaks.

Kissinger denied to newsmen on at least two occasions that he initiated the electronic surveillance of members of his staff or newsmen, but he acknowledged talking about leaks and ways to stop them with then FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

However, the sources, who served on the NSC both during and after the 1969-70 period in which the phone taps were used, say Kissinger himself provided the names of the men he wanted checked.

One of the former NSC staffers said at least two of the newsmen whose phone conversations were listened to had direct and frequent access to Kissinger and much of their reporting was based on what he told them.

The newsmen were CBS diplomatic correspondent Marvin Kalb and London Observer correspondent

Henry Branden. The sources say Kalb particularly was given sensitive information by Kissinger dealing with Vietnam, the Mideast and other areas they say involved national security.

Among the NSC staffers who were eavesdropped on was Winston Lord, a key aide to Kissinger, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, recently nominated as undersecretary of the treasury, and Morton Halperin, an agency consultant who left in 1971.

The bug on Halperin is the only one publicly acknowledged by the Nixon administration, with Kis-

singer saying the surveillance showed nothing to indicate his former aide had ever been indiscreet or leaked classified information.

Other newsmen whose phones were tapped in their homes and, sometimes, offices included New York Times reporters Hendrick Smith and William Beecher and syndicated columnist Joseph Kraft.

However, the former NSC aides said they did not know if Kissinger requested and approved the taps on any newsmen other than Kalb and Branden.

He Was No. 1 News 'Leak'

According to these sources, the taps were placed on these newsmen and NSC aides at Kissinger's request in 1969 and 1970. They also claim there were other taps made after the February 1971 date on which Kissinger said he stopped receiving reports from such surveillance.

The sources said Kissinger's actions could be explained in several ways: First, that in the case of his aides he wanted to check that they were following the Nixon administration position and, second, to insure

that they were personally loyal to him.

One former aide said Kissinger would accept political dissent but was outraged if he suspected any of his employees of personal disloyalty or even discontent over workings conditions.

As to the newsmen, the sources say even though Kissinger himself gave reporters much sensitive information, he was not satisfied their stories always reflected the view he wanted expressed.

Therefore, if the reporters indicated they had obtained information independently

or disagreed with administration policies, Kissinger wanted to know about it, the sources said. The former NSC staffers actually laughed when told that some Nixon administration sources defended Kissinger's actions as designed to clear his aides of suspicion.

Another administration source who has seen some of the reports from the wiretaps says none ever indicated any disclosure of vital information that could have compromised national security.

There was some indication of newsmen picking up guid-

ance as to government policy, he said, "but most of what went on between Kissinger's people and reporters was an exercise in egotism—the newsman swelling up over his inside information and the tipster trying to be impressive with how inside he was."

But, according to the former Kissinger workers it was their former boss who gave out important material to newsmen dealing with American military and negotiating tactics for Vietnam and for the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) with the Russians.