

# Ruckelshaus' New Disclosure Of U.S. Wiretaps

Miami

A former high official of the Justice Department has disclosed that telephone wiretaps were placed on Nixon administration officials and possibly newsmen who were not included in a previously reported 21-month effort.

President Nixon has said it was aimed at stopping leaks of classified information to the press.

According to a sworn statement by William D. Ruckelshaus, discharged as deputy attorney general by

President Nixon two weeks ago, the newly disclosed wire taps were kept separate in FBI files from records relating to the operation authorized by Mr. Nixon.

The New York Times has reported that the initial wiretape effort, which lasted from May, 1969, until February, 1971, and which resulted from Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's concern over leaks of some of the administration's foreign policy positions, involved 13 government officials and four newsmen.

Although none of those 17 wiretaps was authorized by court orders, Mr. Nixon has maintained that all were legal under his authority to protect the nation's security at home and abroad.

However, it is unclear whether the new wiretaps, disclosed by Ruckelshaus in a deposition taken in connection with a civil lawsuit, were also part of an ostensible "national security" investigation.

If not, the Justice Department would have had to obtain warrants from a court after convincing a federal judge that there was probable cause that the officials or newsmen who were targets of the taps were engaged in some criminal activity.

Under questioning by lawyers for Morton Halperin, one of the 13 government officials included in what have come to be known as the "Kissinger wiretaps," Ruckelshaus was asked whether the FBI's files contained records of taps on other government employees in addition to the 13.

"Some," he replied. He was then asked whether there were "any other taps of reporters."

"There may have been one or two," Ruckelshaus said.

Asked why the records of the 17 "Kissinger taps" were kept separate from these others, Ruckelshaus responded, "I don't know. Your guess is as good as mine."

He did not name any of

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the government officials or newsmen who may have been included in the newly disclosed wiretaps or give any information about the dates of installation or duration of the wiretaps.

Halperin is alleging in his suit that the wiretap on him violated certain provisions of the omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.

*New York Times*