

Report on Nixon's Role In Pentagon Spy Case

Washington

President Nixon personally ordered the special White House investigative unit, known as the "plumbers" not to seek prosecution of any suspects in the military snooping on the National Security Council in late 1971, sources close to the inquiry have said.

These sources, some of whom have close White House connections, pictured the President as extremely angry about the pilfering of high-level documents that were not intended for the Pentagon.

But the sources said Mr. Nixon decided to cancel the inquiry after consultation with, among others, John N. Mitchell, who was then the attorney general.

One closely involved source quoted John D. Ehrlichman, the official in overall charge of the investigative unit, as saying, "The President called me off it. He said, 'John, if you prosecute this, you'll blow the whole thing open.'"

Ehrlichman was further quoted as saying that Mr. Nixon had been concerned that some of the high-level White House secrets involved in the military snooping would be compromised if the incident led to legal proceedings.

For the same reason, the sources said, Mr. Nixon also agreed not to prosecute Yeoman first class Charles E. Radford, a key figure in the military snooping, who was suspected of leaking White House documents on the India-Pakistan war to columnist Jack Anderson, who pub-

lished the documents in December, 1971.

It was while investigating that case that the military snooping on the National Security Council was first discovered by the investigative unit.

The council is a White House agency whose function is to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign and military policies relating to national security.

The plumbers unit, led during the snooping inquiry by Ehrlichman and David R. Young Jr., a White House aide, is known to have concluded that rear Admiral Robert O. Welander and Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had knowledge of the snooping.

New York Times