

Did Nixon Use Claim Of Security to Cloak Taps, Senator Asks

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WASHINGTON, May 9 (Ap) — Senator Gaylord Nelson, Democrat of Wisconsin, has raised the question of whether President Nixon may have knowingly used claims of national security to cloak illegal wiretaps and other illegal surveillance.

Mr. Nelson said President Nixon had had ample opportunity to do that, but the Senator said more information was needed before a final judgment could be reached.

"Spread throughout the White House transcripts are conversations of the President and his staff of the tactic of using the claim of national security to justify and conceal illegal activities and violations of individual freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution," said Mr. Nelson.

His remarks were prepared for delivery before the three

Senate subcommittees investigating so-called national security wiretaps placed without judicial warrants.

The Wisconsin Democrat noted that in one White House conversation the President asked John W. Dean 3d, then his chief counsel, how the White House might respond if its involvement in the break-in of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's former psychiatrist were exposed by a Watergate conspirator, E. Howard Hunt.

Mr. Dean suggested that Mr. Nixon might use national security to cover the White House and the President apparently accepted the suggestion.

The transcript quotes Mr. Nixon as responding: "National security. We had to get information for national security grounds."

"I think we could get by on that," the transcript quotes Mr. Dean as saying.

Senator Nelson said that the President had "publicly acknowledged that that break-in was illegal."

And he said conversations regarding surveillance for so-called national security reasons occurred at seven places in the transcripts.