

Colson Allegation

Links Kissinger to Bombing

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Former White House special counsel Charles W. Colson said yesterday that in December, 1972, when Vietnam negotiations had broken down he saw a cable from Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger to President Nixon that said: "Start the bombing immediately. These madmen have double-crossed us."

Colson said that a year later President Nixon reminded him of the cable and said Kissinger "really is unstable at times."

Colson, who made his comments while being interviewed by Barbara Walters on NBC-TV's "Today" Show (WRC), was released Jan. 31 from prison after serving seven months of a one-to-three-year sentence for obstruction of justice in the Watergate scandal.

Reacting to Colson's remarks, a State Department spokesman said, "The record does not support any part of Mr. Colson's statement." Kissinger told reporters as he left the White House, "I will not dignify that with a comment."

The Watergate special prosecutor's office is known to be very skeptical about a number of allegations made by Colson, who pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice for spreading derogatory information about Pentagon Papers defendant Daniel Ellsberg.

During the televised interview, Colson also said:

- President Nixon told him on Dec. 18, 1973, "Maybe what this country needs is a nice clean Jerry Ford, but

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the trouble with Jerry Ford is that it would take him two years just to get up speed."

- The FBI had turned over to the Nixon White House "a very exhaustive report" on former President Kennedy when he was a Navy officer during World War II that indicated Kennedy was "being followed by bureau agents."

- The FBI also had reported to the Nixon White House about "an unfortunate incident in Sen. George McGovern's life" that Colson declined to disclose.

- "Former President Nixon was very much involved in the negotiations that led to the final agreement by which Vice President Agnew resigned."

- "It is inconceivable to me, based on all the evidence, that the CIA did not know in advance about the Watergate break-in." Colson said that while in the White House he read all the CIA files on Watergate.

- It's "beyond dispute" that the CIA knew about plans to break into the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist. Colson added, "Some of the memos I saw certainly went as high as Mr. [Richard] Helms," the former CIA director and now U.S. ambassador to Iran.

- President Nixon told him in 1973 "he was sure that he would have four votes" if the Supreme Court should rule on the President's right to retain the subpoenaed White House tapes. The court subsequently ruled against Nixon, 8 to 0.

Colson, who maintains that he has undergone a religious conversion since he was one of Nixon's intimates in the White House, said he expects to write a book "on

my experience" and to "spend as much time as I can with the Christian Fellowship here in Washington."

A spokesman for the "Today" Show said that in accordance with the program's policy, Colson was not paid for the interview.

Colson said that he was with President Nixon in December, 1972, when a cable from Kissinger at the Vietnam peace negotiations in Paris arrived urging Nixon to "go on national television tomorrow night and announce to the American people that we are resuming full-scale bombing" in Vietnam.

Colson said, "President Nixon did not do that. He sent a cable back to Henry which said 'Keep negotiating.' At President Nixon's insistence Kissinger continued to negotiate for another 14 days until it was obvious that only by resuming the bombing could there be serious negotiations that would end the war."

Colson added, "President Nixon had really run those negotiations out of his own office" and "that was a very stormy period in the relationships between Nixon and Kissinger."

Colson said that in December, 1973, when Nixon was expressing private doubts about Ford becoming President, Nixon said, "Jerry's greatest difficulty is he couldn't control Henry Kissinger."

The former White House aide said the public impression "that Dr. Kissinger had opposed the bombing" was "180 degrees opposite to the facts."

Colson also said that Kissinger "was more concerned than anyone in the White House, including President Nixon" about news leaks when the Pentagon Papers were printed.