

Spy Plan Files Show Nixon Ignored Warning

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Washington

President Nixon approved a plan for expanded domestic intelligence gathering in July 1970, after being cautioned that parts of it were "clearly illegal" and involved "serious risks" to his administration if the operations were ever discovered, according to White House documents.

The program, which Mr. Nixon described in part last

month, was approved by him in July 1970, through H. R. Haldeman, then his chief of staff.

Earlier an aide told Haldeman, "we don't want the president linked to this thing with his signature on paper ... (because) all hell would break loose if this thing leaks out."

In a statement issued May 22, Mr. Nixon said that he

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had rescinded his approval of the "1970 intelligence plan" five days after he ordered it put into operation. He attributed the switch to "reconsideration ... prompted by the opposition of (FBI) director (J. Edgar) Hoover."

ENTRY

The President acknowledged that the "extremely sensitive" documents detailing the plan, some of which have been obtained by the New York Times, contained a provision for "surreptitious entry" by federal agents in the course of certain types of national security investigations.

But Mr. Nixon gave no hint that the Interagency Committee on Intelligence, which recommended in a 43-page report that the existing restrictions against breaking and entering by intelligence agents be removed, had warned that the "use of this technique is clearly illegal."

The committee's recom-

mendations for the lifting of certain restrictions on intelligence gathering were summarized in a top-secret memorandum by Tom Charles Huston, a staff assistant to Mr. Nixon who served as the committee's White House liaison.

The memorandum, sent to Haldeman for the President's approval in early July 1970, notes that surreptitious entry, even by federal agents, "amounts to burglary. It is also highly risky and could result in great embarrassment if exposed."

OBTAIN

The Times obtained three memorandums written by Huston — one summarizing the committee's report to the President, another informing the heads of federal intelligence agencies that the committee's recommendations had been approved and a third providing Haldeman with background on the committee's deliberations and with a strategy for securing Hoover's cooperation.

In recommending that break-in technique be resurrected, the document noted that the FBI "used to conduct such operations with great success," and that the information they produced was "invaluable."

Such burglaries, the memorandum continued, "would be particularly helpful if used against the Weatherman and Black Panthers," and against unspecified "diplomatic establishments."

OTHERS

In addition to asking the President to approve the use of illegal entry, the committee's report, as reflected in the Huston memorandum, requested the authorization of several other measures:

- Permission for the National Security Agency to monitor "the communications of U.S. citizens using international facilities," such as overseas telephone and telegraph circuits.

- The intensification of such electronic surveillance

against "individuals and groups in the United States who pose a major threat to the internal security."

- An increase in the number of "campus sources" working for federal intelligence agencies "in order to forestall widespread violence."

HOOVER

On July 15, 1970, Huston wrote a second memorandum to Hoover and the other three members of the committee.

In that document, also marked "top - secret" by Huston, he told the four men that "the President has carefully studied the special report of the Interagency Committee on Intelligence" and had approved all of its recommendations. When Hoover received word of the President's decision, according to one participant in the report's preparation, "He went through the roof."