

Report on Those 'Security' Taps

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The wiretapping of government officials, defended by President Nixon as necessary to prevent disclosure of his secret foreign policy initiatives, was partly directed at two administration officials who had no contact with such information, according to sources familiar with the operation. leaks."

The sources said that among the 13 government officials whose telephones were tapped between 1969 and 1972 were James W. McLane, then a staff member of the White House domestic council and now deputy director of the Cost of Living Council, and John P. Sears, a former law partner of Mr. Nixon's and then deputy White House counsel.

WIRETAP

Mr. Nixon said on May 22 that he personally authorized the wiretap effort to stop "leaks of secret information (about) a number of highly sensitive foreign policy initiatives" that he had undertaken and which were being compromised by news reports "obviously based on leaks."

The individuals whose telephones were monitored, Mr. Nixon said, were selected through a cooperative effort by Henry A. Kissinger, his adviser for national security affairs, John N. Mitchell, then the attorney general, and J. Edgar Hoover, the late FBI director.

McLane said yesterday that during his service in the Nixon administration, he had known "absolutely nothing about national security," and could not explain why he had been a target of the surveillance program.

During the period in which his telephone was tapped, he worked as head of the White House domestic council's Committee on Aging under John E. Ehrlichman, then

President Nixon's chief domestic adviser.

Sears, a lawyer who left the president's old New York law firm to work in Mr. Nixon's 1968 campaign and became his deputy counsel in January 1969, could not be reached for comment. However, former administration officials said that the job of deputy counsel was not one in which Sears normally would have had access to the sort of information that the President has asserted the wiretap program was designed to protect.

The wiretapping effort has been criticized by William P. Rogers, the departing secretary of state, and other administration officials. Kissinger's role in it is expected to be the subject of questioning at Senate confirmation hearings on his nomination as Rogers' replacement.

Kissinger's associates have said that he did not actually designate those on whom wiretaps were placed, but that he only drew up lists of individuals who had access to the secret information that was appearing in the press.

OPERATION

However, sources well informed about the operation said yesterday that the names of the 13 officials and four newsmen were selected either by Kissinger or General Alexander Haig Jr., then his deputy at the National Security Council and now chief of the White House staff.

Furthermore, the sources said, reports from FBI agents monitoring the wiretaps were sent directly to the President, Kissinger, and, later, to H. R. Halde- man, the former chief of staff.

A White House spokesman said yesterday that he would have no comment on the matter.

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