

Plumbers:
Kissinger's
Briefcase
Was Rifled

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WASHINGTON — The White House "plumbers" accused a U.S. military man of rifling Henry Kissinger's briefcase during one of his visits to China, it was learned yesterday.

The plumbers reportedly sought to connect the incident to Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and an alleged plot by high military officers to spy on Kissinger, then President Nixon's national security adviser, to learn about his super-secret negotiations with the Chinese, the Russians and the North Vietnamese.

But top civilian officials in the Pentagon, sharply disputing the proficiency and credibility of the plumbers, insisted the evidence was inconclusive.

The officials declined to identify the military man, who is understood to have been quietly discharged, on grounds he should not be singled out for something he may not have done.

One of the officials, who described the plumbers as "crazy guys," argued it would defy logic for Presi-

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dent Nixon to retain Moorer as the nation's top military officer if he had been guilty of insubordination.

The official said he had read the entire investigative file and said there is nothing in it to implicate Moorer or any other top-ranking military officer.

The official rebuffed suggestions Nixon may have felt impotent to move against Moorer or inclined to compromise with the military because of his weakened position as a result of the Watergate scandal.

The official, noted for exercising close scrutiny and control over the military, ridiculed the plumbers' claim that there was a high

He contended that White House officials and Senate sources, who are promoting the plumbers, were in fact to justify Nixon's creation of the Plumbers, were in fact doing the President a disservice.

The military spying on Kissinger allegedly occurred in 1971 at the height of his most secret diplomatic negotiations. The plumbers were created to track down leaks to the press, starting with the disclosure of the Pentagon Papers by Dr. Daniel Ellsberg.

As part of their investigation, the plumbers broke into the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist in September, 1971, and some members of the team took part in the Watergate break-in the following June.

Kissinger's suspicions that the military might be spying on him reportedly were aroused in part by the discovery that the Joint Chiefs had prepared a table of organization of his National Security Council staff.

NSC staff members also suspected the Joint Chiefs were using the Defense Intelligence Agency to penetrate foreign diplomatic channels and find out what Kissinger was up to with China, the Soviet Union and North Vietnam.

One staff member said the DIA was violating its legal charter by conducting covert operations abroad. Under a secret NSC intelligence directive (NSCID 6), the Central Intelligence Agency, which is under Kissinger's direct control, has sole jurisdiction over such operations.

At Kissinger's direction, the DIA was ordered to stop poaching on the CIA and shortly thereafter the DIA was removed from the immediate control of the Joint Chiefs and placed under the Secretary of Defense.

Suspicious of military eavesdropping increased when a microphone was discovered in a lamp in the office of Kissinger's assistant for program analysis where the detailed planning was done for the negotiations on Vietnam and strategic arms limitations.

Wayne Smith, the assistant at the time, says he did not know who placed the microphone in his office.

"I don't know who put the Goddamn device there and I don't care," Smith said in a telephone interview from his home in Pacific Palisades.

He said he had left the White House in November, 1971, "when Watergate was still an apartment building."

Smith is now an executive of Dart Industries in Los Angeles.

The device was discovered in late 1971, when Smith's office was being redecorated for his successor.