

Nixon Says He Ordered Wiretaps

NEW YORK, April 29, (AP) —Richard M. Nixon says he ordered wiretaps on Morton H. Halperin and others, "including employees of the National Security Council . . . in an effort to discover the source or sources of leaks of highly classified information."

The former President's remarks were included in a seven-page statement sent to Halperin's attorneys in connection with a suit filed against Nixon by Halperin seeking damages that could run in excess of \$300,000.

American Civil Liberties Union attorneys representing Halperin in the suit filed in federal court in Washington disclosed contents of the Nixon statement on Monday.

Nixon wrote that he had acted under his "broad discretion" as President and was "absolutely immune from civil liability therefor."

At the time of the wiretapping of his home in Bethesda, Md.—from May, 1969, to February, 1971—Halperin was an aide to Henry A. Kissinger, then presidential assistant for national security affairs and now also Secretary of State.

Kissinger has said the wiretaps cast no doubt on Halperin's "loyalty or discretion."

Nixon denied without comment an allegation that he took part in a cover-up of the wiretapping of Halperin and others by having information concerning the taps removed from FBI files and stored in the White House.

Nixon's statement said the suit was barred by the four-year statute of limitations, since the taps occurred ended in February, 1971. But John Shattuck, one of Halperin's attorneys, said Monday night that under the "failure to disclose" provision of the law, the statute of limitations

would not begin until the taps were disclosed in May, 1973.

Shattuck said he believed Nixon's statement was the first time a former President had responded to allegations in a civil suit for damages against him, rather than to seek dismissal of the action.*

The suit, in which Halpe-

rin's wife and three children also are plaintiffs, is to go to trial in September or October before U.S. District Court Judge John Lewis Smith in Washington, Shattuck said.

Under the law, each defendant could get \$100 damages for each day of the wiretapping and alleged cover-up.

* SEE NYT 29 APR 75