

Nixon Unit Reported Probing Watergate

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Though the Nixon administration has generally denied that it has undertaken a full analysis of the Watergate bugging incident and related allegations of political espionage, well-placed sources said this week that such a report is being prepared.

The sources in both the White House and Justice Department said that the analysis is not necessarily for release to the public. But, they said, it is being drafted for possible release if needed to answer future charges in the news media or a congressional inquiry.

John Ehrlichman, the President's top domestic adviser, mentioned the analysis—or so-called "white paper" at a high-level campaign strategy meeting Oct. 29 at the White House, according to these sources.

According to the sources, the analysis, which is not yet complete, will deal with allegations in the news media that a well-organized program to spy on and disrupt the Democratic presidential primary campaigns was conceived by high Nixon aides as basic reelection strategy.

Instructions were to do a factual report—whether or not its findings could be damaging to the administration.

The findings until now introduce "upwards of two dozen new names" of individuals not publicly linked to the alleged program of disruption, the sources said.

The sources would not say whether any of these new names are those of prominent

figures. They said that most of the actions of the two dozen people were legal but would be embarrassing if made public, and that some actions were illegal. More of the actions appeared to involve "intelligence gathering" rather than disrupting Democratic candidates, the sources said.

One source in the Justice Department said the analysis, if released, could possibly unfairly incriminate persons who were operating around the edge of the law but not illegally—in gathering information about the Democrats.

For that reason, and because of the political sensitivity of the disclosures, that source said it is unlikely that the analysis will be released in full or at all.

In any event, the sources said, one function of the analysis is to prepare the administration should news reports continue or a congressional investigation turn up additional information on the alleged political espionage and sabotage campaign.

Behind the order to draft the report, according to the sources, is the strong feeling in some administration circles that the charges must be dealt with at some point.

On Thursday, The Los Angeles Times reported that such a "white paper" had been drafted four weeks ago and undergone at least one revision since then.

The Times report said that the white paper would presumably draw heavily on the investigation of the Watergate incident conducted by John W. Dean III, special counsel to the President.

White House Press Secre-

tary Ronald L. Ziegler denied the report and said "John (Dean) tells me there's no such paper under preparation."

After another news report Thursday on the preparation of a Watergate analysis, Ziegler repeated the denial. He repeated that denial again yesterday.

Ziegler said Thursday that "there were some people at some levels who did a compilation of some press reports" on the Watergate incident, and perhaps this had been misinterpreted as a "white paper."

A "white paper" is the term generally used for a detailed government analysis of a policy or position, most often done at a high level on subjects of substantial controversy.

One of the sources yesterday disputed the use of the term "white paper" for the Watergate analysis, and said a key purpose of the report was to compare the findings of the FBI, which worked 14,000 hours on the case, with the dozens of news media stories on the Watergate incident.