

SFChronicle

FEB 14 1973

Top Security Taps**A New Twist in Watergate Case****Washington**

Information obtained from national security wiretaps was regularly routed to Watergate bugging conspirators E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy while they worked in the White House, according to informed sources.

The sources said that the two men received the information for several months in 1971 and 1972, at a time when domestic radical groups could legally be wiretapped.

Officials of President Nixon's re-election committee testified at the Watergate trial last month that they later paid Liddy about \$235,000 to investigate some of the same radical groups.

SECURITY

National security wiretaps, generally placed by the FBI, are among the most closely held and sensitive data collected by the U.S. intelligence community.

There are two types of national security wiretaps that Hunt and Liddy could have had access to: those against suspected "foreign" subversives and those against suspected "domestic" subversives.

The national security "domestic" taps have been one of the most controversial undertakings of the Nixon administration's Justice Department. On June 19, 1972, in a major rebuff, the Supreme Court unanimously rejected the administration's contention that the executive branch could wiretap "domestic" subversives without approval of a court.

CLEARANCE

A Justice Department spokesman said that, to his

knowledge, Hunt and Liddy were "not cleared to see" either type of national security wiretap and that, if they did, it could be a security violation.

According to the sources, the highly classified reports were routed to Hunt and Liddy through David Young, a staff member of the National Security Council and an assistant to the President's foreign affairs adviser, Henry A. Kissinger.

At the time, Young was supervising a White House group called the "plumbers" that was investigating leaks to the news media. Hunt and Liddy were members of the "plumbers," shared an office with Young. Federal sources have said that Young was not involved in any of the questionable or illegal activities of either Hunt or Liddy. Young could not be reached for comment.

Washington Post Service