

# Nixon Aides and 'Forged' Cables

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Charles W. Colson, President Nixon's former counsel, ordered the forgery of State Department cables to implicate President Kennedy in the assassination of Premier Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam, according to documents released yesterday at the Pentagon papers trial.

One of the documents was the Watergate grand jury testimony of E. Howard Hunt Jr., a convicted water-gate conspirator. He said that when he showed legitimate cables to Colson in 1971 Colson said: "Well, this isn't good enough, do you think that you could improve on

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them?"

Hunt then told how he fabricated new State Department cables.

In Washington, Colson issued a statement denying that he had ordered Hunt to fabricate the telegrams.

On Friday, the jury was sent home until today and so yesterday was devoted entirely to turning over documents to the defense by Judge William Matthew Byrne Jr. in U.S. District Court.

Besides the Watergate testimony, Judge Byrne gave the defendants an affidavit from Egil Krogh Jr., a former White House aide, in which Krogh said that John D. Erlichman had ordered the "covert activity" that led to the break-in of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist. Erlichman, at the time, was President Nixon's chief domestic affairs adviser.

Krogh also said in his affidavit that President Nixon had personally instructed him to "move ahead with the greatest urgency to determine the source of leaks," including the Pentagon papers leak.

## PICTURE

He depicted the President as being so worried that unauthorized leaks would undermine national security that the White House team was formed to investigate the leaks — with the belief that Ellsberg's psychiatric profile might divulge the names of alleged conspirators of the leaks. But, he said, the President did not know about the break-in until it was publicly disclosed here.

But the most startling disclosure was the information revealed in Hunt's State Department cables, as part of his investigation of the Pentagon papers leak, when he noticed that some of the cables had been "extracted," perhaps to be photographed or the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library.

He said that he had given that information to Colson and pointed out to the President's counsel that anyone working for the library had the "opportunity to remove any cables that could have been embarrassing to the Kennedy legation."

"I showed him three of four (legitimate) cables that indicated that they (the Kennedy administration) had (been) pretty close to pulled (sic) the trigger against Premier Diem's head, but it didn't say so in so many words."

It was, then, he said, that Colson asked him if he "could improve on them."

"I said, 'Yes, I probably could, but not without technical assistance.' After all," Hunt said. "I had been given some training in my past CIA career to do just this sort of thing and had done it successfully on numerous occasions, floating forged newspaper accounts, telegrams, and that sort of thing."

"So, with the very meager means at my disposal, which were literally a Xerox machine in the White House, a razor blade and a typewriter — which was not the same one as had been used on the original cables — I set about creating two cables which bore on that particular period," Hunt testified.

## IMPLICATIONS

Hunt never said why he had been ordered to forge the cables, which he did in 1971, but the implication was that they were to be used, in some way, politically — perhaps against Senator Edward M. Kennedy.

The Pentagon papers disclosed that President Kennedy had known of and had personally approved of plans for the coup d'etat that overthrew President Diem in 1963. But neither the papers nor any other documents that have yet come to light have suggested that Kennedy knew that Diem would be killed.