

New Reports on Ellsberg Break-In

Washington

President Nixon, invoking national security, sought on at least two occasions within the past two weeks to prevent the release to the court of details about the burglarizing of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, sources close to the Watergate case said yesterday.

In both cases, after getting contrary recommendations from key advisers, the President was said to have reversed himself and permitted the information to be forwarded to the federal court in Los Angeles where Ellsberg is on trial.

The advice to the President reportedly came from Henry E. Petersen, the Assistant Attorney General who was placed in sole charge of the Watergate investigation in late March, and Secretary of Defense El-

iot L. Richardson, who was nominated last week to be Attorney General.

REACTIONS

High White House officials characterized as "irresponsible" the reports that the President had at first opposed the release of the details of the break-in.

The reports of the two presidential attempts at delays were provided by some of the principals, lawyers and Justice Department officials.

These sources said that the first presidential attempt to postpone release of the operation came after the Justice Department received a memo on April 16 or 17 from Earl J. Silbert, the chief prosecutor in the case.

This memo, the sources said, related that two members of the team that later broke into the Watergate of-

fices of the Democrats last June 17 — E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy — had, acting under White House orders, attempted to burglarize the Beverly Hills office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist in early September, 1971. This information was eventually transmitted to California on April 25, the sources said.

SECOND

The second attempted delay, the sources said, came last Monday after Egil Krogh Jr., a former Presidential aide was told by John D. Ehrlichman, the President's assistant for domestic affairs, that "the President doesn't want any more of this to surface for national security reasons."

The White House issued guidelines last Thursday to Krogh, who has said that he authorized the California break-in, telling him that he was free to testify regarding steps taken about Ellsberg. However, it was reported that the guidelines advised Krogh that he was not authorized to discuss the details of specific leaks or any information about specific national security concerns.

In an affidavit released yesterday by the Los Angeles court, Krogh told of receiving a report from the FBI, indicating that the Pentagon papers had been in the possession of the Soviet embassy in Washington prior to their publication in June, 1971, in the New York Times. The papers are a secret Pentagon study of the Vietnam war.

The affidavit also referred to a Times article concerning the U.S. position in the strategic arms limitation talks.

It was this kind of information, White House sources indicated, that was considered too vital to national security by Mr. Nixon to be transmitted to the judge in the Ellsberg case.

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