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# Watergate Part of SFChronicle 'Illegal Campaign'

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The Watergate bugging and the burglary of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist were part of an elaborate, continuous campaign of illegal and quasi-legal undercover operations conducted by the Nixon administration since 1969, according to highly placed sources in the executive branch.

There are more instances of political burglaries, buggings, spying and sabotage conducted under White House auspices that have not yet been publicly revealed, according to the sources.

Although the undercover operations became most intense during the 1972 presidential campaign, such activities the Watergate bugging and Ellsberg burglary, which previously had appeared to be isolated, were regarded in the White House as components of a continuing program of covert activity, according to the sources.

The clandestine operations, the sources said, were at various times aimed at radical leaders, student demonstrators, news reporters, democratic candidates for President and Vice President and the Congress, and Nixon administration aides suspected of leaking information to the press.

## SOURCES

The sources said that many of the covert activities, although political in objective, were conducted under the guise of "National Security" and that some of the records relating to them are believed to have been destroyed. Some of the activities were conducted by the FBI, the Secret Service and special teams working for the White House and Justice Department, according to the sources.

Most of the activities

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were carried out under the direct supervision of members of President Nixon's innermost circle, among them former White House deputies H.R. (Bob) Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman and John W. Dean III; former attorney general John N. Mitchell, and former assistant Attorney General Robert C. Mardian, the sources said.

Although most of the clandestine operations are shrouded in secrecy, they are known to include:

- The use of the Secret Service to obtain information on the private life of at least one Democratic presidential candidate in 1972.

- The possession of Senator Thomas Eagleton's confidential health records by Ehrlichman, former White House domestic affairs chief, several weeks before the information was leaked to the news media.

- The use of paid provocateurs to encourage violence at anti-war demonstrations early in the first Nixon administration, and again in the 1972 presidential campaign.

- Undercover political activities against persons regarded as opponents of the Nixon administration. The activities were conducted by "suicide squads" in the FBI — a bureau term for teams of agents engaged in sensitive missions which, if revealed, would be disavowed by the FBI and the White House.

- The use of paid-for-hire "vigilante squads" by the White House and Justice Department to conduct illegal wiretapping, infiltrate radical organizations for purposes of provocation and engage in political sabotage. The "vigilante squads" were made up of professional wire-

tapppers and ex-CIA and ex-FBI agents.

One such "vigilante squad" under the supervision of former White House aides E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy, conducted the Watergate bugging in 1972 and the burglary at the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist in 1971. The Watergate grand jury reportedly is examining other undercover activities by the squad.

According to one highly placed source in the executive branch, undercover operations by the Hunt-Liddy squad were transferred from the White House to the committee for the Re-Election of the President under an arrangement worked out by Haldeman, then chief of the White House staff, and Mitchell, then attorney general.

The transfer of the squad from the White House to the re-election committee in late 1971 and early 1972 was made to gear up for the upcoming presidential campaign in which "dirty tricks" spying and deceptions would be a basic part.

Two persons occupying high positions in the Nixon administration have told the Washington Post that other "vigilante squads" were established by the White House and Justice Department to conduct super-secret political operations.

To prevent further disclosure of the activities, the sources reported, the White House has promulgated "national security" guidelines for use in the Watergate investigation that are designed, at least in part, to prevent testimony about the undercover operations by those with knowledge of them.

Several sources described the political espionage and

sabotage conducted by the President's re-election committee, including the Watergate bugging, as the logical extension of covert operations established long before.

"Watergate was a natural action that came from long-existing circumstances," one high-level participant in many of the undercover activities observed. He added: "It grew out of an atmosphere. This way of life was not new . . . there have been fairly broad (illegal and quasi-legal) activities from the beginning of the administration. I didn't know where 'national security' ended and political espionage."

According to this source, the activities were aimed at whatever individual or groups the White House perceived as a threat at any given moment. "First it was radicals," he said, "then it was reporters and leaking White House aides, then the Democrats. They all got the same treatment: Bugging, infiltration, burglary, spying, et cetera."

As one example, this source cited the 1971 FBI investigation into the background of CBS news correspondent Daniel Schorr. The investigation, the source said, was personally ordered by Haldeman.

At the time that it was publicly revealed that Schorr was being considered for a job in the administration — an assertion that administration officials have since conceded was untrue.

In addition to the use of the FBI for such intelligence-gathering purposes, the White House used the Secret Service in the 1972 campaign to investigate the private life of at least one Democratic presidential candidate, according to reliable sources.