

KISSINGER'S ROLE ON TAPS OUTLINED

Senate Unit Gets Memo and Hears Richardson

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 10—

The Nixon Administration attempted today to clarify the role played by Henry A. Kissinger in the wiretapping of 13 of his Government associates and four newsmen over a period of 21 months.

The move was made in response to a request by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that emerged in hearings on the nomination of Mr. Kissinger to be Secretary of State.

Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson and his acting deputy, William D. Ruckelshaus, went before the committee in closed session with a three and one-half page memorandum dealing with the wiretapping that went on from May, 1969, to February, 1971.

Concern Over Leaks

According to the memorandum and to their remarks in closed session, the genesis of the tapping program lay in the concern of Mr. Kissinger over repeated leaks in the press of classified information relating to his work as the President's national security adviser.

According to Administration sources, this is what Mr. Richardson and Mr. Ruckelshaus told the committee in closed session:

Mr. Nixon was described as sharing his adviser's anger. But it appears that Mr. Kissinger's appeal to put a stop to the leaks was what inspired formal action.

Sometime in late April, 1969, the sources said, Mr. Nixon called in Mr. Kissinger and the late Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, J. Edgar Hoover, to discuss the leak problem.

Sometime in late April, 1969, according to the sources, with Mr. Kissinger present, the President authorized Mr. Hoover to initiate an F.B.I. inquiry to find the leaks and stop them and, as part of the investigation, to employ "national security wiretaps" and other means of surveillance.

Names Reported Given

Mr. Kissinger and his staff aide at that time, Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., supplied names of seven staff members of the National Security Council to Mr. Hoover or his deputy, William Sullivan, the sources said. They reportedly identified them as parsons with access

to security information and requested that they be investigated.

The sources said the next part of the procedure was for Mr. Hoover to write a request for wiretap authorization with the name attached and the brief explanation that it had been asked for by the White House.

The requests were sent to the then Attorney General, John N. Mitchell, for approval and initialing, according to the sources, something Mr. Mitchell denied before the Senate Watergate investigators last July. The sources said that the F.B.I. had subjected Mr. Mitchell's initialings to laboratory tests and had established that they were "true and correct."

Ruckelshaus Asked Report

Some of the 17 names were described as having been generated within the F.B.I. as a result of information garnered from other wiretaps. At least one name was said to have been submitted as a result of a conversation between Attorney General Mitchell and the White House. This was thought to be John F. Sears, at the time a White House counsel.

Last May as acting F.B.I. director, Mr. Ruckelshaus ordered a comprehensive report on the 17 wiretappings after press reports appeared linking the Nixon Administration to electronic surveillance of newsmen and at least one member of the National Security Council. The report was the basis for the memorandum submitted today.

At that time Mr. Kissinger was equivocal about his role in the wiretapping, saying on May 14 that he had neither asked for nor approved the taps and, then, on May 16, admitting that he had supplied names for the list of surveillance candidates.

Persons Listed

The 17 persons selected for wiretapping either as officials with access to "sensitive information" or potentially involved in leaking, and the newsmen who had published leaked information were:

Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Richard L. Sneider, Morton Halperin, Winston Lord, Daniel I. Davidson, Anthony K. Lake and Richard M. Moose, all of the National Security Council.

Also, Lieut. Gen. Robert E. Pursley, military aide to the Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird; William H. Sullivan, a State Department official assigned to the Vietnam peace talks; Richard G. Pedersen, aide to then Secretary of State William P. Rogers.

Also James W. McClane and John P. Sears, White House Aides; William Safire, White House speech writer, and four newsmen, William Beecher and Hedrick L. Smith of The New York Times; Marvin Kalb of the Columbia Broadcasting System; and Henry Brandon of The London Sunday Times.