

White House Disputes Testimony on Ellsberg Episode

<p>By Carroll Kilpatrick Washington Post Staff Writer</p> <p>The White House yesterday disputed testimony by former presidential aide John D. Ehrlichman that President Nixon "specifically" approved a mission to the West Coast by E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy to seek information on the Pentagon Papers leak.</p> <p>Deputy White House press secretary Gerald L. Warren</p>	<p>declined to provide any specific information, but he said "it would be wrong to draw the conclusion that the President knew of a trip to Los Angeles by the people referred to."</p> <p>Ehrlichman told a Los Angeles County grand jury in June, according to a transcript of the testimony released Monday, that Mr. Nixon approved the 1971 mission by Hunt and</p>	<p>Liddy to obtain information on Daniel Ellsberg and the leak of the papers.</p> <p>Ehrlichman did not say that Mr. Nixon approved the burglary of the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist. Three Cubans recruited by Hunt entered the office of Dr. Lewis Fielding, a psychiatrist, about a week after the first trip Hunt and Liddy made to Los Angeles.</p>
---	--	---

<p>Ehrlichman said that the President established the so-called Plumbers' unit with responsibility to plug leaks under former assistant Egil Krogh. The question of sending Hunt and Liddy to Los Angeles was "discussed specifically with the President, before it was approved," Ehrlichman testified.</p> <p>When questioned about the testimony, Warren referred re-</p>	<p>porters to earlier statements by the Presidents. On May 22 the President said he had instructed Krogh's office to "find out all it could about Mr. Ellsberg's associates and his motives." The President also said: "I did not authorize and had no knowledge of any illegal means to be used to achieve this goal."</p> <p>The President did not know</p>	<p>of the break-in until March 17, 1973, Warren said.</p> <p>He said it would be improper for him to discuss testimony before a grand jury, but he said "I must caution you not to draw conclusions" from the testimony.</p> <p>He then said it would be wrong to assume that Mr. Nixon knew of the trip by Hunt and Liddy.</p>
--	---	---

Krogh, Ehrlichman, Hunt, Liddy and David Young, a member of the Plumbers' group, have been indicted in Los Angeles on charges of burglary and conspiracy to commit burglary in connection with the entry into Fielding's office.

On Aug. 15, Mr. Nixon said in a speech that he had "at no time" authorized use of illegal methods by the Plumbers.