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Ever since the plumbers' operation against Daniel Ellsberg came to light the White House has been resisting efforts to investigate any further into the plumbers' activities, claiming national security is the reason and not specifying anything more than that. But according to AP, informed sources have clarified it now, at least a little bit; they've told AP that the White House is afraid that any further investigation of the plumbers' unit could endanger the life of a foreign intelligence agent inside the Soviet Union.

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In September of 1971 columnist Jack Anderson reported quite simply that the CIA was able to eavesdrop on Soviet leaders, and in an interview with AP today, the syndicated columnist acknowledged printing the story and he said he did it because he had evidence the Soviet Union's leaders were already aware of the bugging, and secondly, he purposely wrote the story so as to protect the agent or agents who carried out the bugging. Essentially, then, the White House is claiming national security for something the Soviet Union could have found out about just by reading The Washington Post, though Anderson claims that Moscow was aware of the bugging operations against them anyway, even before the story was printed.

In addition the Chicago Tribune reported today that this agent that the White House is supposedly trying to protect is no longer in active service.

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