

Krogh Statement Excerpts

Following are excerpts of Egil Krogh's statement made public yesterday:

My role began on July 15 or 16, 1971, in San Clemente. At that time, John Ehrlichman informed me that the President wanted me to perform an urgent assignment in response to the unauthorized disclosure of the Pentagon Papers. The entire resources of the executive branch were to be brought to bear on this task, and I was to make certain that the relevant departments and agencies treated the matter as one of highest priority.

Because Dr. Daniel Ellsberg had been identified as responsible for the leak of the Pentagon Papers, he was to be a vital part of the inquiry.

Specifically, his motivations, his possible collaborators, and his potential for further disclosures were to be determined to the greatest extent possible. In that connection, Mr. Ehrlichman instructed me that the President had directed that I read his book, "Six Crises," and particularly the chapter on Alger Hiss, in preparation for this assignment. The message that I drew from this chapter was the President's concern that we proceed with respect to the Pentagon Papers and Dr. Ellsberg with a zeal comparable to that he exercised as a congressman in investigating Alger Hiss.

Mr. Ehrlichman instructed me that David Young of Dr. Kissinger's staff would be working with me on this assignment and that we should form a small unit for the purpose. Mr. Young was to devote full time to the unit. My participation was to be part time, for I was to continue my ongoing responsibilities, particularly solidification of the Vietnam drug program and creation of a Cabinet Committee to fight international narcotics traffic. As it happened, these latter assignments occupied most of my time in August. Finally, Mr. Ehrlichman instructed me that the activities of the unit were to be impressed with the highest classification and kept secret even within the White House staff.

Mr. E. Howard Hunt was assigned to the unit on the basis of his extensive prior experience with the Central Intelligence Agency. Mr. G. Gordon Liddy, with whom I had worked on matters of narcotics law enforcement and gun control while he was at the Treasury Department, came to the unit because of his prior experience with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

A damage assessment prepared by the CIA prior to establishment of the unit reported grounds to suspect that a full set of the Pentagon Papers had reached the Soviet Embassy. I was early informed that similar intelligence had been furnished by the FBI. Yet The New York Times had received only a partial set. This development reinforced suspicion that Dr. Ellsberg or one of his collaborators, if any, may have had some sort of foreign involvement.

On July 24, I was summoned to the President's office with Mr. Ehrlichman. This meeting followed by one day the appearance in The New York Times of the fallback position of the United States in the SALT talks at Helsinki. The President appeared deeply troubled by this unauthorized disclosure and directed me to expand the work of the unit to cover it. He described the matter of unauthorized disclosures as intolerable, directed the extensive administration of polygraph tests, and made clear that the protection of national security information must outweigh any individual reluctance to be polygraphed. He discussed the creation of a new security classification which would condition access to national security information upon advance agreement to submit to polygraphing.

He was deeply concerned that any further disclosure of such information could only undermine the SALT and Vietnam peace negotiations. His intense determination was evident. He instructed that further leaks would not be allowed and made me feel personally responsible for carrying out this instruction.

The work of the unit went forward with regard to the SALT leak, the Pentagon Papers, Dr. Ellsberg, and some other unauthorized disclosures. Polygraphing was immediately begun (although on a far more limited scale than originally envisioned). Dr. Ellsberg's extensive knowledge of classified national security information in addition to the Pentagon Papers was ascertained. The intensity of the national security concern expressed by the President fired up and overshadowed every aspect of the unit's work.

It was in this context that the Fielding incident, the break-in into the offices of Dr. Ellsberg's psychiatrist, took place. Doubtless, this explains why John Dean has reported that I told him that instructions for the break-in

had come directly from the Oval Office. In fact, the July 24 meeting was the only direct contact I had with the President on the work of the unit. I have just listened to a tape of that meeting, and Dr. Ellsberg's name did not appear to be mentioned. I had been led to believe by the White House Statement of May 22, 1973, that the President had given me instructions regarding Dr. Ellsberg in the July 24, 1971, meeting. It must be that those instructions were relayed to me by Mr. Ehrlichman.

In any event, I received no specific instruction or au-

thority whatsoever regarding the break-in from the President, directly or indirectly.

As I stated in the affidavit I filed before Judge Byrne, Mr. Ehrlichman gave the unit authority to engage in covert activity to obtain information on Dr. Ellsberg. The precise nature of that authorization and the extent to which it specifically covered the break-in are matters that will be the subject of testimony in the prosecution pending in California and that may be involved in a prosecution in the District of Columbia. So are the origination of the idea of a break-in and the manner of its formulation. I have expressed the desire, to which the Special Prosecutor has acceded, to defer any testimony until after sentencing. I would simply say that I considered that a break-in was within the authority of the unit and that I did not act to foreclose one from occurring despite the opportunity to do so. Indeed, I was under the clear impression that such operations were by no means extraordinary by the CIA abroad and, until 1966, by the FBI in this country—an impression confirmed by former officers of both agencies on the unit's staff.

The break-in came about because the unit felt it could leave no stone unturned in the investigation of Dr. Ellsberg. The aims of the operation were many:

- to ascertain if Dr. Ellsberg acted alone or with collaborators;
- to ascertain if Dr. Ellsberg in fact had any involvement with the Soviets or other foreign power;
- to ascertain if Dr. Ellsberg had any characteristics that would cause him to make further disclosures;
- to ascertain if prosecution would induce him to make further disclosures that he otherwise would not.

My best recollection is that I focused on the prevention of further leaks by Dr. Ellsberg and the termination of any machinery he may have established for such disclosures. That was the use most central to the assignment of the unit as I understood it.

To my knowledge, the break-in netted nothing.

My participation in the

work of the unit progressively diminished, and for all intents and purposes ended in November, 1971. I was recalled to the unit for a few days in December, 1971, in connection with the India-Pakistan conflict leak. In that period, I was asked to authorize a wiretap in connection with a highly sensitive aspect of that leak. I declined and was thereupon removed from the unit the same day. I learned in reviewing the unit's files on Dec. 13, 1973, that the tap was effected after my removal along with another one in the same investigation. These are the only instances of wiretapping by the unit of which I am aware, and I first learned of them on Dec. 13.

In August, 1972, I was deposed at the Department of Justice in connection with the grand jury investigation of the Watergate break-in. I had been repeatedly instructed by Mr. Ehrlichman that the President considered the work of the unit a matter of the highest national security and that I was under no circumstances to discuss it. I was specifically advised by John Dean that the Fielding incident was not relevant to and would not be touched upon in the deposition. The Assistant United States Attorney who conducted the deposition himself advised me that he was not interested in pursuing national security matters.

In the course of the deposition, I was asked questions relating to travel by Messrs. Hunt and Liddy. I answered the questions by interpreting them as excluding national security and thus the travel of Liddy and Hunt to California for the Fielding incident. This interpretation was highly strained, reflecting a desperate effort on my part to avoid any possible disclosure of the work of the unit in accordance with the instructions of the President that had been relayed to me by Mr. Ehrlichman.

Subsequently, in April 1973, when Judge Byrne requested persons having knowledge of the Fielding incident to file affidavits with him, I determined that a disclosure of my role was imperative.