

Colson Tells Of Nixon Ire Over Leaks

Washington

Former White House special counsel Charles W. Colson testified yesterday that before the 1971 Ellsberg break-in, President Nixon told him to stop national security leaks and "I don't give a damn how it is done."

Colson also said Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, then a White House aide, also believed "that the leaks must be stopped at all costs."

Colson made the statements in a nine-page affidavit submitted to U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell in support of his request for discovery of "national security" evidence in his case.

Colson was indicted March 7 by a Watergate grand jury on one count of conspiracy to violate the civil liberties of a citizen in the break-in at the office of Pentagon Papers defendant Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

The office was burglarized during Labor Day weekend in 1971, about two months after the publication of the Pentagon Papers about the origins of the Vietnam war.

Colson said he had about ten meetings with Mr. Nixon between June 15, 1971, and July 2, 1971. He told of one meeting at which then-White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman was present.

"On that occasion, the President, speaking to Mr. Haldeman and to me, said in effect: 'I don't give a damn how it is done, do whatever has to be done to stop these leaks and prevent further unauthorized disclosures: I don't want to be told why it can't be done.'

"This government cannot survive, it cannot function if anyone can run out and leak whatever documents he wants to. We will be destroyed in the negotia-

tions that we have under way with the Soviet Union; we will never be able to stand up against the Soviet Union; people's lives are at stake in Vietnam.'"

"I want to know who is behind this and I want the most complete investigation that can be conducted," Colson quoted Mr. Nixon as saying. Colson said that Kissinger "was even more alarmed over the leaks than the President.

"He believed that the leaks must be stopped at all costs, that Ellsberg must be stopped from making further disclosures of classified information, and that those acting in concert with him must be stopped."

Colson also said Kissinger reported on Ellsberg's "private habits."

"I had the clear impression that Dr. Kissinger was reacting to conversations he had had at various times with the President," Colson said.

Colson contends that a conspiracy to break into the psychiatrist's office could be justified in spite of the Fourth Amendment on grounds the search was authorized by the President pursuant to his power to protect the national security.

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