

NYTimes MAY 4 1974
The Times Apparent Target of White House Drive

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 3—The New York Times was apparently a particular target of White House efforts in the summer of 1971 to find and halt leaks to the press, according to the White House transcripts and elaborations supplied by investigative sources.

In recounting the efforts at a meeting on March 27, 1973, John D. Ehrlichman advised President Nixon, according to the transcripts, that some "very serious breaches" of security, including the "Szulc group" and the publication of the Pentagon papers, had prompted the White House to investigate.

A "whole series of steps," including the use of so-called "national security" wiretaps, was undertaken, Mr. Ehrlichman said.

Series of Articles Cited

"We had an active and ongoing White House job using the resources of the bureau [the Federal Bureau of Investigation], the agency [the Central Intelligence Agency] and the various department security arms with White House supervision."

Authoritative sources said that the term "Szulc group" apparently referred to a series of articles written in mid-1971 by Tad Szulc, a reporter for

The Times, that were based on classified intelligence reports.

One article by Mr. Szulc, said to have aroused particular concern, disclosed on June 22, 1971, that the United States was then shipping military equipment to Pakistan after the State Department had announced the suspension of such sales.

Federal investigators said that they possessed evidence that reports compiled from a wiretap on Mr. Szulc had flowed at the rate of "two or three a week" into a room in the basement of the executive office that served as a headquarters for the team of investigators that dubbed themselves the "plumbers."

These sources also named William Beecher, a former Times military correspondent who is now a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, as another individual on whom the plumbers received regular wiretap reports for the same period.

A report by Mr. Beecher in The Times of July 23, 1971, is understood to have caused distress among high diplomatic and military officials in this country who believed that it had disclosed prematurely sensitive elements of the bargaining between the United States and the Soviet Union in the strategic arms limitation talks.

Other official sources have

identified Mr. Beecher as one of four newsmen whose telephones were monitored by the F.B.I. between May, 1969, and February, 1971 as part of a separate program aimed at stopping what President Nixon has termed "serious national security leaks."

It is not clear whether the F.B.I. installed the wiretaps that served as the source of the reports received by the plumbers after they were set up in July, 1971, to oversee the investigation of leaks to newsmen from within the executive branch.

The impetus for the creation of the plumbers was the publication by The Times in June, 1971, of the Pentagon Papers, a top-secret Defense Department study of American involvement in the Vietnam war. Mr. Ehrlichman assured the President that the White House had "moved very vigorously on the whole cast of characters in the Pentagon papers thing."

Mr. Ehrlichman did not name any of the "characters," but Kathleen Chenow, the plumbers' secretary, has reportedly told Federal investigators that, in addition to the names of Mr. Szulc and Mr. Beecher, she believes that she also recalls seeing wiretap reports on Neil Sheehan, The Times reporter who obtained the Pentagon papers.

Miss Chenow, the investigators said, recalls receiving such reports on Dr. Daniel Ellsberg, who was charged by the Government with espionage, theft and conspiracy in connection with the leaking of the papers to the press.

According to one source, she has testified that she was under the impression that these wiretaps had been installed by the F.B.I. at the plumber's request.

The charges against Dr. Ellsberg and a co-defendant, Anthony J. Russo Jr., were dismissed by a Federal Judge last May 11 after the Government failed to produce records of an instance in which the former Defense Department official had been overheard by F.B.I. agents talking on the telephone of Morton H. Halperin, a former official of the National Security Council.

Mr. Halperin's home telephone, along with those of 12 other Government officials, was tapped as part of the earlier surveillance effort that ended in February, 1971.

A year before the dismissal in the Ellsberg case, Judge William Matthew Byrne Jr. of the United States District Court in Los Angeles had ordered the Justice Department to turn over to him all recorded over-hearings of Dr. Ellsberg.