

# Nixon: Kissinger called for wiretaps

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WASHINGTON — President Nixon told John Dean in February last year that Henry Kissinger asked that wiretaps be placed on the telephone lines of administration officials, according to a White House tape recording obtained by the House Judiciary Committee.

Kissinger denied under oath that he had done so in testimony last fall before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The portion of the tape recording in which Nixon makes the assertion was deleted from the transcripts of White House recordings that the President made public April 30. But the Judiciary Committee has the entire tape and heard it on Thursday night.

Discussing Kissinger's

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rolé in the controversial wiretapping, Nixon said, according to the recording: "I know that he asked that it be done. And I assumed that it was."

The President went on to refer specifically to wiretaps on "Lake and Halperin" — Anthony Lake and Morton Halperin, both National Security Council staff members in the early days of the Nixon Administration.

The conversation occurred on Feb. 28, 1973, just a few days after Time Magazine had broken a story asserting that a number of newsmen and Nixon Administration officials had been wiretapped.

The administration at first

vehemently denied the taps, but later admitted that a total of 17 taps had been placed in 1969 through 1971 — thirteen on administration officials and four on newsmen — all seeking to trace the source of leaks to the press.

The question of Kissinger's possible role in establishing the taps became a key issue last September in his Senate confirmation hearings after he had been appointed Secretary of State.

In an executive session before the committee Sept. 17, the text of which was made public in October, Kissinger described his role as follows:

First, I never recommended the practice of wiretapping. I was aware of it, and I went along with it to the extent of supplying the names of the people who had had access to the sensitive documents in question.

"Despite some newspaper reports, I never recommended it, urged it, or took it anywhere.

"Indeed, the thought that I might be in a position to do this in the fourth month of a new administration which I joined as an outsider is in itself inconceivable."

Kissinger's reference to "the fourth month" referred to the fact that the wiretapping program began just a few months after Nixon took office in 1969.

It started in mid-1969 and was terminated in February of 1971 the administration eventually acknowledged.

In the Feb. 28, 1973, conversation, Dean, and Nixon were discussing the general subject of the bugging of newsmen and Dean mentioned the Time magazine story which, he told Nixon "we are stonewalling totally here."

"Oh, absolutely," the President said.

"Stonewalling" was a term used frequently in the White House to describe a policy of flatly denying stories about Watergate.

At this point in the transcript made public by Nixon April 30 a parenthetic note

appears: "Material not related to Presidential action deleted."

The text of the deleted matter, obtained by the Judiciary committee, reads:

'President: "Sure, and the Henry's staff . . . — he insisted (unintelligible) after working with McGovern — uh, uh work Muskie. Incidentally didn't Muskie do anything bad on there?"

"Henry (unintelligible) at least I know not because I know that I know that he asked that it be done. And I

assumed that it was Lake and Halperin. They're both bad. But the taps were too. They never helped us. Just gobs and gobs of material: gossip and bullshit — the tapping was very, very unproductive thing. I've always known that. At least, I've never, it's never been useful in any operation I've ever conducted."

Several other paragraphs about other matters were deleted in the transcripts before the conversation resumed.

By the time of Kissinger's confirmation hearings in September the administration had acknowledged the secret wiretap program it had denied strongly at first.

By this time Elliot Richardson had become attorney general and William Ruckelshaus temporary FBI chief.

The two made an intensive study of the program and discussed it before the Foreign Relations Committee in

connection with Kissinger's confirmation.

In their testimony they appeared to give Kissinger a clean bill of health on the wiretaps, although Richardson said at one point that he had had to rely on "Dr. Kissinger's own recollection" of what occurred "as to which, of course, he is a better witness than we are."

The White House has said that material deleted from the transcripts made public by President Nixon was ma-

terial not related to Watergate.

Judge John Sirica, however, apparently believed that these paragraphs were related to Watergate, in a broad sense, because it was he who sent a tape of the Feb. 28 conversation to the Judiciary Committee.

Judge Sirica announced that he had removed everything from the tapes sent to the committee which he did not believe was relevant to the Watergate impeachment inquiry.