



Wiretap Spotlight On General Haig

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THE LATEST material on wiretapping points the guilty finger at a figure who has up to now seemed peripheral. He is General Alexander Haig, Henry Kissinger's former deputy at the National Security Council and now chief of staff at the Nixon White House.

Haig's name turns up over and over again when the dirtiest work is afoot. Anybody who wants to sort out Kissinger's role in the wiretaps will also have to make an assessment of what Haig did.

The most important case in point involves William Safire, the former White House staff man who now writes columns for the New York Times. Safire was a speechwriter for the President with special responsibilities in the economic field.

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DURING THE early part of his work at the White House, at least, he had no national security responsibilities. There was no national security reason for him to be the object of a wiretap. While those facts may not have been known to everybody in the administration, they were known —VERY MUCH KNOWN— to Kissinger and the staff at the National Security Council.

But the records now released as part of the House Judiciary Committee's investigation of impeachment show that the tap on Safire was instituted by Haig. The request for wiretap authority on Safire was forwarded from the late FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, to Attorney General John Mitchell on Aug. 4, 1969. It alluded to previous wiretap requests made on behalf of Kissinger by Haig.

The judiciary committee staff, though fairly circumspect in accepting FBI documents at face value, apparently had no doubt about Haig's role. The staff report says that the wiretap on Safire was "requested orally by Haig."

The fruits of the Safire tap were, according to FBI summaries, sent to Kissinger on Jan. 15, 1970. But in his testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on his nomination as Secretary of State, Kissinger was asked by Senator Clifford Case, (Rep-N.J.), whether he had ever received "information as a result of the taps on Safire." "No," he replied.

So who did read the material forwarded by the FBI to Kissinger's office? Well, the obvious possibility is the man who the bureau says instituted the tap in the first place, Haig.

That possibility seems particularly strong because of Haig's role in some other matters touching the tapping. Haig appears from FBI records to be the chief operational man in working out the arrangements for the tape.

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MAYBE HAIG has merely been caught up in the bureaucratic lingo employed by the FBI. But an awful lot of other dirty stuff is connected with the Haig name. He apparently had a major role in the firing of former special prosecutor Archibald Cox. He also figures deeply in the plumbers' investigation of the Pentagon "spy ring."

So if the Foreign Relations Committee truly wants to get to the bottom of the wiretapping business, it will question Haig — and not so gently either.