

Tapes Depict Ehrlichman as a Puppet

By Jack Anderson

The Nixon tapes, which have been withheld from the public for use in the Watergate trials, portray, John D. Ehrlichman as a patsy.

Sources who have listened to the tapes say that ex-President Nixon would discuss strategy with his top aide, H. R. Haldeman. Then they would call in Ehrlichman and go through the same discussion again, thus giving him the impression that he was a full participant in the decision-making.

But invariably, they would adopt the strategy that Mr. Nixon and Haldeman had already agreed upon, and the unsuspecting Ehrlichman would wind up doing the dirty work. As one source put it, "Nixon and Haldeman used Ehrlichman as their hired gun."

They sent Ehrlichman, for example, to try to persuade CIA deputy director Vernon Walters to head off the FBI's investigation into the plumbers' operations. Ehrlichman was also assigned to approach ex-Attorney General John N. Mitchell and to ask the unwilling Mitchell to take the rap for the Watergate fiasco.

Sources close to Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski say that Ehrlichman is now aware how Mr. Nixon and Haldeman used him. "That's why Ehrlichman has called the former President as a witness," said one source.

"It is clear," agreed another, "that Ehrlichman has gone off the reservation." In other words, he no longer will try to protect Mr. Nixon and Haldeman.

The view of Ehrlichman as a puppet, manipulated by Mr. Nixon and Haldeman, comes from a cumulative study of the secret tapes, say our sources.

Rockefeller Investigation — A painstaking but preliminary FBI investigation of Nelson Rockefeller has produced no information that should prevent his confirmation as Vice President.

Agents are still digging, however, into rumors that a Rockefeller-financed operation in Latin America was infiltrated by Communist sympathizers.

The investigation is centering on the American Association for Economic and Social Development, which received grants for 14 years from the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation to bring

rural reform and better schools to South America. "The main thing we don't know," confided an FBI source, "is how they spent the money."

Another Rockefeller enterprise under investigation by the FBI is the International Basic Economy Corp. founded by Nelson Rockefeller to operate supermarkets, poultry firms' and machinery equipment facilities in some 20 countries, mainly in Latin America.

Our FBI sources stress that Rockefeller isn't suspected of any subversive or shady dealings. But the FBI wants to be able to answer any questions that may be raised by Rockefeller's most extreme critics.

Agents have questioned just about everyone who has had any dealings with Rockefeller, from doctors and clergymen to sheriffs and political figures.

A picture has emerged of a Rockefeller who has managed to keep above the hurly-burly. He has insulated himself from any questionable activities, the FBI has found, by a layer of attorneys, financial advisers and political associates.

"The rough-and-tumble stuff

was handled by his associates," said a source.

Naval Superiority — Intelligence reports confirm the conclusion of the authoritative British publication, "Jane's Fighting Ships," that the Soviet Navy had surpassed the U.S. fleet in fighting power. Here's a rundown:

- In submarines, the Soviet Union has deployed a fleet of 67 ballistic missile submarines, many of them nuclear-powered. This compares to 41 American missile subs. States one NATO document: "The Soviet submarine force is now more capable and has out-built NATO in nuclear-powered submarines."

- In surface ships, the newest Soviet vessels "carry more elaborate and more sophisticated electronic systems. One Soviet surface vessel, according to NATO intelligence, is "ton for ton, the most powerful warship ever built." According to another confidential document, "the sophisticated missile systems of its advanced surface ships gives the Soviet Union a powerful ship-to-ship capability and a considerable superiority in missile units over NATO."

©1974, United Feature Syndicate