

Kissinger Says He Had Secretaries Secretly Listen to Phone Calls and Make Summaries

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 12—Henry A. Kissinger assigned his secretaries to listen surreptitiously to telephone calls to and from his White House office and make summaries of the conversations when he was President Nixon's adviser for national security affairs, according to a deposition filed today in Federal court here.

A 46-page deposition filed by Mr. Kissinger, who is now Secretary of State, in answer to questions from Morton H. Halperin, listed 11 conversations, including direct quotes, that Mr. Kissinger had found in his files based on summaries prepared by his secretaries.

Former White House officials

and aides confirmed that Mr. Kissinger did not warn callers that a secretary was on the telephone line. One former member of the National Security Council staff said that Mr. Kissinger had also had his secretary eavesdrop on and record his conversations with President Nixon. He said that he did not believe Mr. Nixon had been told that a secretary was listening in.

Suit on Wiretaps

The disclosure came among a series of answers to questions posed in a lawsuit by Mr. Halperin involving 17 electronic wiretaps placed on White House aides, Government employees and newsmen between 1969 and 1971.

Mr. Halperin served on Mr.

Kissinger's staff from early 1969 until September 1970. The Federal Bureau of Investigation placed a wiretap on his home telephone on the orders of the White House on May 9, 1969, and continued the tap until February 1971, more than five months after Mr. Halperin had left the Government.

In this latest deposition, filed in United States District Court here, Mr. Kissinger said for the first time that he believed Mr. Nixon had directed that electronic surveillance be placed on Mr. Halperin specifically as well as authorizing a general program.

"At the Oval Office meeting in April 1969, President Nixon authorized an electronic surveillance to be conducted," the

deposition said. "While his authorization was general in terms and not limited to specific individuals, my understanding was that he then directed surveillance of Morton Halperin and certain others."

Present at Meeting

The meeting, testimony has brought out, took place in the Oval Office on April 25, 1969. It was attended by Mr. Kissinger, the President, J. Edgar Hoover, then director of the F.B.I. and John N. Mitchell, the Attorney General.

Mr. Mitchell has given a deposition in the same case in which he said he could not recall that Mr. Nixon had ordered specific wiretaps against individuals. He said that he

believed that Mr. Kissinger had been responsible for preparing a list of names of persons to be tapped.

This crucial point, whether in fact the wiretap program was pressed by Mr. Kissinger or by Mr. Nixon and the F.B.I., may be settled later this week. Mr. Halperin and his lawyers are scheduled to take a deposition from President Nixon at San Clemente, Calif., on Thursday.

It was in trying to reconstruct his discussions of leaks of information that Mr. Kissinger disclosed his practice of having secretaries eavesdrop on certain of his conversations.

"Business telephone calls from my White House office were usually monitored by my

personal secretaries, who then prepared brief summaries of those conversations," his statement said. "The summaries are not complete, and may not, in some cases, accurately reflect the substance of the conversations covered."

The quotes conversations from Feb. 3, 1969, to May 7, 1969, in which he and unnamed parties (the names were withheld since the talks were used as examples) discussed leaks.

The 11 conversations he mentioned are presumably only a small part of the summaries of conversations in his files. Several sources said that Mr. Kissinger had continued this practice throughout his White House service and that there

were "literally hundreds" of summaries.

Having secretaries eavesdrop on telephone calls is not unheard of in Washington. Testimony before the Senate Watergate Committee, for instance, disclosed that in addition to President Nixon's taping system, two former Presidential aides, H. R. Haldeman and John W. Dean 3d, surreptitiously tape-recorded calls over their office telephones.

The assigning of an assistant to listen and draw up a summary is regarded by most experts on privacy as the same as recording the call. In some states, but not Washington, D.C., the law requires the person recording the call to warn the other party.