

WXP Nixon Had Kissinger Calls Logged

By Jack Anderson
and Les Whitten

Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, who was implicated in tapping the telephones of seven subordinates and four reporters, had his own phone calls monitored.

No less than Richard M. Nixon, in a fit of presidential pique, ordered the Secret Service to monitor calls to and from his top foreign policy adviser in December, 1972.

This has been confirmed by the man who transmitted Nixon's orders to the Secret Service, Charles W. Colson, then a member of Nixon's inner circle. He has described the incident in a sizzling, soon-to-be-published book, "Born Again."

We have also spoken to other sources familiar with the backroom machinations that led to the eavesdropping. Here are the details:

On Sunday, December 17, 1972, President Nixon ordered the Air Force to bomb North Vietnam into submission to force a settlement. The devastating round-the-clock raids outraged our adversaries and allies alike. Even at home, Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield called the bombing "Stone Age strategy."

Kissinger pleaded with the President to explain his reasons for the bombing to the world. Nixon not only declined, but ordered strict silence about the bombing throughout the bureaucracy.

Not long afterward, columnist James

Reston of The New York Times wrote that Kissinger had opposed the bombing. Reston was critical of the air assault, calling it "war by tantrum."

Colson read the column to Nixon, who was furious. "I will not tolerate insubordination," he exploded. "You tell Henry he's to talk to no one, period! I mean no one! And tell him not to call me. I will accept no calls from him."

Colson relayed the message to Kissinger who agreed not to discuss the bombing with anyone in the press. Meanwhile, Nixon buried himself in a Washington Redskins football game, but it didn't cool him down, Colson recalls.

Possibly to escape Nixon's wrath, Kissinger had flown off to Palm Springs, the California resort, for a few days of relaxation. But Nixon, still fuming, decided to keep tabs on Kissinger.

As Colson recounts it, the President "ordered me to have the Secret Service keep a record of all incoming and outgoing calls from Kissinger's heavily guarded villa in Palm Springs."

Colson issued the orders through an aide and the Secret Service began monitoring Kissinger's calls, says the former White House aide. He's unsure whether the Secret Service tapped Kissinger's lines, bugged his end of the conversation or merely used devices to list incoming and outgoing calls. The Secret Service had the capability, according to our sources, to do all three.

The Secret Service learned from the monitoring that Kissinger tried to reach Nixon. But true to his threat, the angry President refused to take the calls. Colson reports that Kissinger then "proceeded to call his old friend, Joe Kraft."

Three days later, the columnist wrote in The Washington Post that Kissinger had valiantly opposed Nixon's bombing order. This so infuriated the President that he began "counting the days until Henry left to return to Harvard," recalls Colson.

Sources close to Kissinger say he was acutely aware of the move to send him back to Harvard. The H. R. Haldeman-John Ehrlichman-Charles Colson palace guard were "out to get him," according to intimates of Kissinger. During this period, Kissinger felt the palace guard wanted to force him out in disgrace and make him the scapegoat for Nixon's bombing policies.

Kissinger's intimates confirm that the palace guard succeeded for awhile in cutting Kissinger off from the President. But as Nixon sank deeper in the Watergate mire, he turned increasingly to foreign affairs to divert attention from the scandal. Eventually, he concluded that he needed Kissinger.

So instead of ousting Kissinger, the President added to his stature. At the time, Kissinger had only one title; he was the President's national security adviser. But in August, 1973, Nixon invited Kissinger to San Clemente