STAT
Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4
ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 35.

ATLANTIC MONTHLY
May 1982

KISSINGER AND NIXON IN THE WHITE HOUSE

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

Seymour M. Hersh, a former correspondent for The New York Times, *won the Pulitzer Prize for international reporting in 1970, for his revelation of the massacre at My Lai, in South Vietnam. He is the winner of virtually every major journalism award, including the George Polk Award, which he has received four times—more than any other reporter in the history of the Polk Awards. His new book, which will be published early next year by Summit, is a history of Henry Kissinger's service as national security adviser to Richard Nixon, during Nixon's first term. The article below is drawn from that book; it deals with White House wiretapping activities and with the White House internal-security unit known as the Plumbers. A second* Atlantic *article by Mr. Hersh, to be published later this year, will be concerned with one aspect of the Nixon–Kissinger foreign policy during Nixon's first term.*

I. THE WIRETAPS

ROGER MORRIS QUICKLY WON HENRY A. KISSINGER'S trust in the early months of the Nixon presidency. Not only was he a good friend of Lawrence S. Eagleburger, who had emerged, after Colonel Alexander M. Haig, Jr., as Kissinger's closest confidant among the staff members of the National Security Council, but he was also bright, articulate, and appropriately caustic for a thirty-one-year-old Harvard Ph.D. at work in the White House. Morris's responsibility was primarily for African affairs, and his memos on the situation in Nigeria—where the federal government was waging a bitter civil war with Biafran separatists—had impressed both Kissinger and Nixon.

It was not surprising, then, that Morris was asked by Eagleburger to sit in Kissinger's office and "cover" it one weekend day sometime in the late spring of 1969. Haig, who usually worked seven days a week, had rare time off, and Eagleburger had an appointment outside the White House and needed relief. Kissinger was spending the weekend in New York at his parents' home—a trip that, in those early days, he often made.

Morris literally moved into Kissinger's office that day. At one point during the quiet morning, a courier from the Federal Bureau of Investigation came in and left a sealed envelope for Kissinger. Morris brooded about the highly classified document. The courier had explained that the letter contained "very urgent" material. Should he call Henry? Morris could imagine Kissinger's angry impatience at his caution: "Idiot! Of course open it." And so he opened it.

The envelope was from J. Edgar Hoover—for Kissinger's "Eyes Only." "It was this long, detailed account of Martin Luther King's sex life," Morris says. "There were transcripts"—obviously from wiretaps—"and indications that photographs were available." Some of the women with Dr. King had apparently been FBI informants. Morris was appalled.

A few hours later—sometime after lunch—Morris was

CONTINUED

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

joined by Larry Eagleburger, and Morris quickly showed him the FBI documents. "I was speaking as an old friend and as a Foreign Service colleague and I said, 'This is absolutely scurrilous stuff.' "

"Larry just glanced at the first page or two, with the ho-hum attitude of an aide reading a telephone directory, and said, 'Oh, yeah, we get these all the time.' " Eagleburger then went to a nearby file cabinet, opened it, and pulled out Hoover files on members of the NSC staff, including Morton H. Halperin, who had worked in the Pentagon in the Johnson Administration. Files were being kept on Martin Luther King (who had been slain the previous year), Eagleburger told his distressed colleague, "to blunt the black anti-war movement." Morris was not reassured, but kept his peace.

In the beginning, morale was high among the newly recruited members of Henry Kissinger's National Security Council staff, who felt themselves to be a hand-picked elite assembled not as a result of post-election patronage but solely on the basis of their expertise. Many, such as Roger Morris, were Democrats and former members of the Johnson Administration's National Security Council who viscerally disliked Richard Nixon, but Kissinger had been persuasive in insisting that his staff would be above politics. Bureaucratic life in the last years of the Johnson Administration had been stifling—the White House's foreign policy had been intertwined with the Vietnam War to the exclusion of nearly all other issues. This would change, Kissinger assured his staff. There would be an open system, in which all foreign-policy issues would be analyzed and reviewed and then presented to the President, with options, for his decision. There would be a fresh approach to resolving the Vietnam War and—so Nixon and Kissinger assured their aides—settlement of that exhausting and divisive issue within the year. In fact, nothing would change, because Nixon and Kissinger were obsessed not with opening the system to new ideas but with seizing control of it.

HENRY KISSINGER HAD ENTERED THE WHITE House on Inauguration Day with immense power and no illusions about its source. He understood that his authority would never be disputed as long as he kept his sole client—Richard Nixon—pleased. Kissinger had loyally supported and endorsed Nixon's decision in late February to begin secretly bombing Cambodia with B-52 aircraft from the Strategic Air Command. The bombs were to be reported, even inside the military chain of command, as having fallen in South Vietnam. In April, Kissinger had been among those advocating extreme measures against North Korea when a North Korean aircraft shot down an unarmed Navy electronic-intelligence plane, known as an EC-121, ninety miles off the Korean coast, killing all thirty-one crew members aboard. His loyalty and his toughness in those incidents had strengthened his position, but by the end of April, 1969, the President still seemed unwilling, or unable, to isolate Melvin R. Laird, the secretary of defense, and William P. Rogers, the secretary of state, from White House decision-making.

Sharing his foreign-policy authority with Laird and Rogers inevitably made Kissinger insecure—and this insecurity never really went away while he was in the White House. Being Jewish didn't help. There is no evidence that Kissinger was an anti-Semitic Jew or was in any way ashamed of his Jewishness. But being Jewish was a chink in his armor—a vulnerability that could threaten his position. Nixon clearly viewed Kissinger's Jewishness as a drawback, at least during the early years of his presidency. Immediately after taking office, he assigned all responsibility for the Middle East to William Rogers. It would be the only area of such responsibility for Rogers.

There were days when Nixon would directly castigate liberal Jews in front of Kissinger. "Nixon would talk about Jewish traitors, and the eastern Jewish establishment—Jews at Harvard," senior presidential aide John D. Ehrlichman recalls. "And he'd play off Kissinger. 'Isn't that right, Henry? Don't you agree?' And Henry would respond: 'Well, Mr. President—there are Jews and Jews.'" When Jerome B. Wiesner, former science adviser to the Kennedy Administration, criticized Nixon's decision, in March of 1969, to deploy a limited antiballistic-missile system, Ehrlichman says, Nixon angrily denounced Wiesner in front of Kissinger as "another one of those Jews."

That spring, Morton Halperin quickly became a dominant concern in the White House. During the last years of the Johnson Administration, Halperin had been a marked man to senior military men in the Pentagon—most notably to Earle Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—for his role in turning around the government's policy on Vietnam. Wheeler was later among the first to complain to Kissinger after Halperin joined the NSC staff. Senator Barry Goldwater also complained, in a letter sent April 22, 1969, to John Mitchell, the attorney general. Goldwater described Halperin as among those who "made it so hard for the military to operate in the Pentagon by their strategic papers which were forced down the throats of the Joint Chiefs and Commanders."

Hoover, too, repeatedly expressed doubts about Halperin's loyalty; among other things, he told the White House, Halperin had once sponsored a Vietnam War teach-in at Harvard. Kissinger knew better, of course. Halperin had sponsored the teach-in as a *supporter* of the war. He had been among those advocating a strong military response to the North Korean attack on the Navy spy plane; he had helped set up a newly revised National Security Council system that had provided Nixon and Kissinger with immense personal control over the bureaucracy; his advice on issues ranging from strategic-disarmament talks to the Vietnam War was superb; he was a tireless worker who believed that the Nixon Administration was committed to

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

getting out of Vietnam. Throughout the spring of 1969, Halperin repeatedly praised the Nixon–Kissinger team to his friends in Washington and Boston. He was not disloyal.

But Hoover and Mitchell and Goldwater and Nixon thought he was, and so Kissinger began to savage Halperin behind his back. John Ehrlichman later testified about taking notes, as was his custom, on conversations between Kissinger and Nixon in the Oval Office that spring. The men were discussing possible leakers of information, and Mort Halperin was prominently cited by Kissinger, Ehrlichman said, "as being singularly untrustworthy." Ehrlichman added, "I gathered from the context of the conversation that Dr. Kissinger knew him, knew him quite well." During the conversations, Kissinger depicted Halperin as "philosophically in disagreement" with the President on matters of policy. Ehrlichman said that it was his impression that Halperin did more than merely disapprove of the Nixon–Kissinger decisions: "I gather that he sabotaged them."

THE WHITE HOUSE WIRETAPS WERE INITIATED ON May 9, a few hours after the publication, on page one of *The New York Times*, of a highly accurate dispatch from Washington revealing the B-52 bombing of Cambodia, by William Beecher, a military correspondent. Beecher's dispatch did not describe the excessive secrecy and fraudulent record-keeping involved in the bombing, but it did report that the missions were designed to "signal" North Vietnam that the Nixon Administration would be tougher and far more willing to take military risks for peace than previous administrations had been. Kissinger spoke with Hoover four times on May 9, asking him to find the leakers and declaring, according to a Hoover memorandum, that the White House "will destroy whoever did this if we can find him, no matter where he is."

Later, in attempting to deny responsibility for initiating the wiretaps, Kissinger told newsmen that he had met on the day of the article's publication with Mitchell, Hoover, and Nixon to discuss newspaper leaks. He subsequently changed that account and said that the meeting had taken place, according to his less-than-precise office logs, on April 25, in the Oval Office. In all of his comments and testimony about the wiretapping, Kissinger depicted himself as a passive participant in the decision, made by his superiors, to begin the surveillance. "I can say that the idea that this was not common practice or that this was in any sense illegal simply never crossed my mind," he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in September of 1973. In *White House Years*, the first volume of his memoirs, Kissinger provided a further explanation: his motive in going along with the wiretapping "was to prevent the jeopardizing of American and South Vietnamese lives by individuals . . . who disclosed military information entrusted to them in order to undermine policies decided upon after prayerful consideration . . ."

In truth, the May 9 Beecher article simply provided the rationale for installing the wiretaps; it was a catalyst, not the major factor. Kissinger and Nixon were equally—if not more—concerned about a series of leaks in late April and early May regarding some of the hard-line options that had been discussed after the downing of the Navy's EC-121 reconnaissance plane. On May 6, three days before the B-52 story, William Beecher had published a detailed and accurate account of some of the secret deliberations during the EC-121 crisis. Beecher revealed that Nixon and Kissinger had considered B-52 bombing raids against airfields in North Korea as well as the use of nuclear weapons. Amazingly, the Beecher account was not considered an important story by other newspapers or by radio and television, although it flatly contradicted the White House's public version that Nixon and Kissinger had calmly and coolly decided not to take action. Late in the afternoon on May 5, according to Hoover's office calendar, Kissinger visited the FBI Director at the Justice Department; the meeting was undoubtedly linked to Beecher's report, to be published in the next morning's *Times*, which would tell the nation that the men in the White House were talking war, not peace.

For Nixon and Kissinger, the May 6 Beecher account may have brought additional chills, for they could not be sure how much the *Times* reporter knew about one of the truly important secrets of the EC-121 crisis. Did he know that Nixon had become quite drunk early in the crisis?

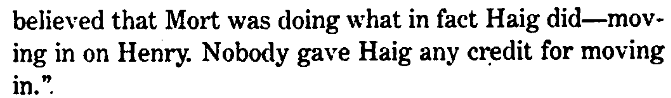
Nixon's drinking had yet to be perceived as a significant problem for Kissinger and his immediate staff, and the incident was quickly hushed. Halperin, for one, was not told. Larry Eagleburger kept a standing lunch date with an old friend that first week after the EC-121 shootdown and was obviously upset. "Here's the President of the United States, ranting and raving—drunk in the middle of the crisis," the shaken Eagleburger told his friend.

There were other secrets to protect, too. Both Nixon and Kissinger knew by early May that if the North Vietnamese did not respond to the administration's offer of mutual withdrawal, to be presented formally at the Paris peace talks and to the American public within days, the response would be escalation of the war. And Kissinger knew, too, that Halperin's support of the administration's policy in Vietnam was based on what Halperin thought that policy was, and not on what Nixon and Kissinger knew it would be. The same held for Halperin's dovish colleagues on the National Security Council staff.

Another factor in the increasing discord in the White House was Alexander Haig, who had been chosen by Kissinger as his military aide. As a certified hard-liner on Vietnam, Haig had little use for the NSC moderates' doubts and concerns about the war. Halperin was a special target, not only because of his role in the Johnson Administration but also because of his closeness to Kissinger. "Halperin was the early once-and-future menace—for everybody," Roger Morris observes. "In essence, everyone

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4



believed that Mort was doing what in fact Haig did—moving in on Henry. Nobody gave Haig any credit for moving in."

Al Haig was immensely popular with the young, bright, and ambitious Kissinger aides when he first joined the NSC staff. He was not viewed as an intellectual threat—his first assignment was the routine task of preparing the President's daily intelligence summary—and the Army colonel struck most of his colleagues as open and self-effacing. He laughed easily, held his gin well, and had a lively, scatological wit. Along with handling the daily intelligence summaries, Haig had access to the vast number of private, back-channel messages from Kissinger's office to American officials throughout the world. He saw, as few other NSC staffers could, the enormity of the foreign-policy takeover that Kissinger and Nixon were trying to accomplish by side-stepping William Rogers and Melvin Laird. As an excellent bureaucrat, he knew that more power for Kissinger meant more power for him.

None of the NSC members, in scores of interviews many years later, were quite sure how Al Haig did it, but within months he managed to become indispensable to Henry Kissinger. His loyalty was astonishing: Haig seemingly worked all the time—every day, every night, every weekend—ensuring that the flow of documents in and out of Kissinger's chaotic office was uninterrupted. And Haig was no minor-league courtier; he had learned from his days as an aide-de-camp and in the Pentagon the art of flattering a superior in a way that put him at ease.

Others on the staff—ever sensitive to the bureaucratic pecking order—soon came to realize that Haig's aggressiveness and assertiveness were being encouraged and countenanced by his patron, Henry Kissinger. For Kissinger, Haig's very presence in his outer office served as a way of demonstrating to the senior military men in the Pentagon and to the hawks in Congress and on the President's staff that Kissinger was reliable. "Haig was the guy Henry could point to," one former NSC staff man recalls, "and say, 'If I were a Harvard liberal, a left-wing kook, would I have Al Haig working for me?' He was Henry's insurance policy."

Haig was that, but there was much more. As Richard L. Sneider, Kissinger's aide for East Asian affairs, recalls, "Haig moved in on Henry and he moved in from the very beginning. First of all, he was Henry's butler and his chauffeur. Henry never knew the kind of perks that could be arranged—private planes for trips to New York for dinner, limousines—and he loved it. Haig also was very shrewd politically where Henry was naive. He was advising Henry at first on how to handle Haldeman and Ehrlichman. When Henry had to wear a white tie and tails for his first White House dinner, it was Haig who went to Henry's house and helped him dress for the first time."

Haig knew far more about wiretapping and the government procedures involved than did anyone else in the White House; he had been exposed to FBI wiretap materi-

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

als while working as a special assistant in the Pentagon in the early 1960s, and had struck up a friendship then with William C. Sullivan, a senior Hoover assistant who was in charge of FBI domestic intelligence activities.

Wiretapping NSC aides was a dirty business, and everybody in the White House and the FBI knew it. Kissinger's method of handling it was simple: he put Haig in charge. It was Haig who, over the next two years, would formally transmit the names of NSC staff members and reporters to be wiretapped. It was Haig who repeatedly went to William Sullivan's office in the FBI to read the wiretap transcripts and summaries. It was Haig who, nearly two years later, transmitted the final order to curtail the surveillances.

It was Haig, too, who gave Kissinger his basic alibi for his role in the wiretapping. "I would not say that I ever said to the FBI, Please tap this individual," Kissinger told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in July of 1974. "My perception is that I would not have said anything to the FBI. That was done by Haig. I would have said to Haig, We have had this leak, give the names of the people who had access to the information."

Haig seemed truly to enjoy the snooping. In subsequent years, he constantly checked up on younger staff members to ensure that they did not meet with journalists. One junior NSC official recalled being braced by Haig for not getting clearance in advance for one such lunch. The conversation was rattling and left a distinct impression that Big Brother was always watching.

Haig seemed to have no ambivalence about what he was doing. In 1973, just before the White House wiretaps became a Watergate issue, he told me: "I have absolutely no apologies to make. The wiretaps for the purposes were justified and anyone who claims otherwise is not filled in." It was as if the National Security Council were an Army boot camp, and the men working for Henry Kissinger were recruits with no right to privacy, aides-de-camp who could be subjected to a dressing-down from an officer at any time. If Henry Kissinger did not fully share that attitude, he at least condoned it.

The wiretaps did not stay secret very long. In June, Roger Morris decided to visit Larry Eagleburger, who had fallen ill with tension and overwork, at the Washington Hospital Center. "He was lying there as we talked," Morris recalls. "Tears welled up in his eyes and he said, 'Don't say anything on your phone. You're being tapped.'" Eagleburger also confided that Halperin was finished in the White House.

Morris may have been the first to know, but within weeks the word was out: Halperin was being wiretapped, and he was in trouble. So were two other liberal NSC aides, Daniel I. Davidson and Richard M. Moose. The messenger was Al Haig. Halperin's demise pleased Laurence E. Lynn, a former Pentagon analyst who had joined Kissinger's staff and immediately engaged in a running battle with Halperin over control of the NSC studies on the SALT talks; both men were constantly passing memorandums to Kissinger without informing each other. At one point, Lynn was offered another spot in the Nixon Administration and—not being an amateur in the ways of bureaucracy—sought to pass the word to Kissinger through Haig. Haig immediately made it clear that Halperin was on the way out, Lynn recalls. Halperin was in trouble with the President and with Senator Barry Goldwater, Haig said, and was being "monitored." Lynn, who understood what Haig meant, stayed on the job.

Early that summer, Davidson, who also was a holdover from the Johnson Administration, left the White House after a talk with Haig, and word quickly filtered through the staff that Davidson had been caught leaking on a wiretap. Larry Eagleburger added to the rumors in these weeks by confiding to Roger Morris that Halperin's name had shown up on an intercept by the National Security Agency of a Japanese Embassy transmission. The NSA reported that Halperin had been discussing sensitive negotiations over the future status of Okinawa with Japanese officials in Washington, who had cabled the conversation to their foreign office in Tokyo. Morris got the impression from Eagleburger that the White House could have made a case against Halperin for treason. (Halperin acknowledges holding private talks with the Japanese; such talks, he says, were also held during the Johnson Administration, and were always considered to be part of the normal bargaining process.) By midsummer, too, Moose, a Foreign Service officer who was known to be a dove on Vietnam, was reported to be on his way out. Moose had spent five months in 1966 on a congressional fellowship program in the office of Senator J. William Fulbright, the Arkansas Democrat who was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—and Richard Nixon's instant enemy. Moose also had run afoul of Haig, who viewed Fulbright—so he told Moose—as a "traitor" to the United States.

Sometime in June, W. Anthony Lake, a young Foreign Service officer, arrived from a sabbatical at Princeton University to replace the stricken Eagleburger as Kissinger's special assistant. There was an immediate change in the office outside Kissinger's office, in the cramped White House basement quarters. Al Haig moved to Eagleburger's desk, a few feet from Kissinger's private office, and Lake slipped into the desk vacated by Haig. The significance of the shift was not lost on the NSC staff, whose members knew that Haig was getting close to the job many wanted—that of deputy. Lake later revealed to the Watergate Special Prosecution Force that within months he had become aware of the wiretapping and had also begun to suspect that wiretap transcripts were being kept in a top-secret safe in the Situation Room in the basement of the White House. The safe, designed for the storage of the nation's nuclear-targeting materials, as well as the codes to activate and arm America's nuclear weapons, was under twenty-four-hour guard.

Lake and Morris, fellow Foreign Service officers, even-

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

tually became close friends, and it wasn't long before Lake shared his suspicions about the Situation Room safe.

Over the next two years, a number of personal aides would rotate in and out of Kissinger's immediate office; all quickly learned that the White House was wiretapping some of its aides.

KISSINGER QUICKLY SEIZED UPON THE WIRETAPS, not only as a way of proving anew his loyalty to Nixon but also as a means of verifying the personal loyalty of his own staff. Equally important, the wiretapping would enable Kissinger and Nixon to monitor the loyalty of Secretary of Defense Laird.

Inside the National Security Council the hatred for Laird and his military assistant, Air Force Colonel Robert Pursley, was palpable. In late April of 1969, Kissinger had been infuriated by the refusal of Laird and Pursley to go along with the White House plans for military retaliation in North Korea after the EC-121 shootdown. There were other serious disagreements on policy issues—including nuclear-disarmament talks and the administration's Vietnamization plans. Laird still insisted, to Kissinger's outrage, on making the decisions as to when and where American troops would be withdrawn from South Vietnam. "Cutting out Mel Laird is what we did for a living," Larry Lynn says. "Henry used to joke about Laird's horrible syntax. He'd let us listen in on their conversations and Henry would predict accurately what Laird was going to say and then make gestures and smirk at us as they talked." Another senior NSC aide has recalled, with a laugh, "For a long time, I thought Laird's last name was 'crook.' 'Mel Laird's a crook,' Henry would always say."

Haig's attitude was similar. Charles M. Cooke, Jr., a former Pentagon official who joined the staff of Elliot L. Richardson, then an undersecretary of state, recalled a lunch later in 1969 with Al Haig in the White House mess. It was his first meeting with Haig, who initiated the conversation by reminiscing about his relationship with Cooke's father, a four-star admiral who had briefed General Douglas MacArthur's staff in Japan before the Korean War. Haig was then a junior officer on the MacArthur staff. It began as a pleasant conversation, Cooke recalls. "I didn't know much about Haig. Then he starts telling me what a traitor Mel Laird is. Haig said, 'He's a traitor to the country and will destroy the Armed Forces.'" The appalled Cooke said nothing as Haig continued to rail. "Haig said Laird was trying to destroy our capability to destroy our enemies and our capability to hit North Vietnam," Cooke recalls. One specific complaint stood out, he says; Haig cited Laird's effort to recall the Air Force's F-105 fighter-bombers from duty over North Vietnam because of the planes' high loss rate in combat. A similar proposal had been debated hotly in the Johnson Administration.

Haig's complaint stood out because Cooke, who had been a major in the Air Force and had taught at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs for years, agreed with Laird's view. After lunch, Cooke says, "my decision was that I could not deal with Al Haig—and I never did deal with him again."

It is only against this background of distrust and intrigue that the earliest group of White House wiretaps can be assessed. The first man to be wiretapped was Halperin, whose home telephone was under surveillance shortly after 6 P.M. on the evening of May 9, three days before Attorney General Mitchell formally signed the FBI authorization for the tap. Three other wiretaps—on Dan Davidson, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, and Bob Pursley—were installed on May 12. (Sonnenfeldt, a Soviet specialist, had known Kissinger for many years and had been among the first to be invited to join the NSC staff.) On May 20, NSC staff members Richard Sneider and Dick Moose, the former Fulbright aide, were wiretapped.

Haig, with his simplistic view that those who were against the war were enemies of the state, may indeed have believed that the taps were a necessity. But Kissinger knew better. For him, the wiretaps provided a security blanket, more proof to Nixon, Hoover, and Mitchell that he could be trusted. Kissinger was an ardent leaker himself and knew, as any senior national-security official in Washington quickly learns, what to say and what not to say on the telephone.

Halperin summed up the situation in an interview years after the wiretapping: "The notion that you can find out who's leaking and the notion—which Henry keeps putting forward—that you can prove that somebody was not leaking or exonerate somebody by tapping their phone is absolutely preposterous. I'm not going to come home at night and dial Bill Beecher and say, 'Hey, Bill, we're bombing Cambodia.' I'm sure the FBI knows that Beecher lives about ten minutes from me, and in that particular year we happened to have theater tickets together with our wives. We used to drive down to the Arena Stage [a Washington theater] together, and, obviously, if I was going to tell him anything, which I wasn't, I would have done so on a grassy knoll near the Arena Stage and not on the telephone. You just don't find out whether people are leaking by wiretapping, and I think they knew it, too."

The wiretap on Colonel Pursley must have been one of the most important ones to Kissinger. Kissinger and Nixon believed, and continued to believe throughout Nixon's first term, that Laird was constantly leaking stories in an effort

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

to ingratiate himself with the press as a secret dove and to fight Kissinger's growing power. The other wiretaps served a multitude of purposes for Kissinger. To begin with, four of those tapped—Davidson, Halperin, Sneider, and Sonnenfeldt—were Jewish; tapping them not only played into the anti-Semitism in the Oval Office but also demonstrated that Kissinger was able to rise above his religious background, a point Kissinger needed to prove if he was to have any influence on Middle East policy. In addition, Davidson was considered to be a protégé of W. Averell Harriman, a senior Democratic statesman, and Kissinger, by agreeing to that wiretap, would have a new window on the Democratic establishment, a group that he was privately beseeching not to criticize the Nixon policies. And finally, and perhaps most important, the wiretaps on Moose, Sneider, Davidson, and Halperin would tell much about what those men—all known to favor a quickly negotiated settlement in Vietnam—thought of him.

On May 20—according to one of William Sullivan's memorandums to Hoover—Kissinger and Haig came to the FBI offices in downtown Washington to read wiretap logs. The Sullivan memorandum says: "On doing this, he [Kissinger] said 'it is clear that I don't have anybody in my office that I can trust except Colonel Haig here.' He mentioned that he was under great pressures to adopt a soft line on foreign policy. But he said he is not going to do so." Kissinger later denied making the visit, and Sullivan would testify that he had no recollection of it. But the memorandum, found in the FBI files during an inquiry into the wiretaps four years later, remains.

The next stage was to begin wiretapping newsmen. By September, Kissinger and Haig had forwarded the names of three—Henry Brandon, of *The London Sunday Times*, Marvin Kalb, of CBS News, and Hedrick Smith, of *The New York Times*—to the FBI. Brandon and Kalb were close to Kissinger and were direct recipients of many briefings and leaks. National security surely was not a rationale for the wiretaps on them, since Kissinger knew that he was the source of much of their classified information. J. Edgar Hoover had long considered Brandon, who was born in Czechoslovakia, to be an agent for the Czech and British intelligence services, and Richard Nixon and a group of aides in the White House were told by, of all people, Henry Kissinger, late in 1969, that Kalb was an agent of the Rumanian government.

Kissinger knew the allegations against Kalb and Brandon were preposterous. His interest in the wiretaps had nothing to do with such beliefs but was personal: he was playing to the President's prejudices in an effort to ingratiate himself further. He also wanted to learn the identities of Brandon's and Kalb's other sources in the government and perhaps to find out as well what the two reporters were saying behind his back. There was another reason, perhaps irresistible to the White House, for the Brandon wiretap: monitoring the private life of Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Brandon's wife, Mabel, was extremely friendly with Joan Kennedy, and many of their most intimate conversations were monitored by the FBI. (Not everything got to the White House, however. The Watergate prosecutors later learned that one highly personal discussion of Mrs. Kennedy's "problems with Teddy" was typed up and delivered to Courtland J. Jones, a supervisor in the FBI's Washington field office, for transmission to higher officials. Jones told the prosecutors that he destroyed the transcript instead of sending it to the White House. "I knew what those people would do with this stuff," he explained.) Brandon, who was one of the few reporters in Washington to have some access to Nixon, was also known to be talking to Halperin. The FBI had gone beyond mere wiretaps in the case; its agents were able to supply the White House with photographs of the two meeting for lunch in downtown Washington.

In his testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kissinger suggested that the wiretap on Brandon may have been aimed at him. "I must have been tapped frequently on that tap, because Brandon was the only journalist I knew socially when I came to Washington, and I spoke to him very frequently and I had no conceivable interest in tapping Brandon." There is no evidence, however, that Kissinger was a target of the FBI or of the Oval Office in those early months of the Nixon Administration. His close aides, such as Larry Eagleburger and Al Haig, were not wiretapped, although they, theoretically, also had access to the most sensitive information about the EC-121 incident and the B-52 bombings. And, as Kissinger also knew, Eagleburger was among those who had been leaking to favored columnists and reporters. By the spring of 1969, for example, Eagleburger had established rapport with Robert Novak, one of the authors of the widely syndicated Evans & Novak column, and, at Kissinger's direction, had begun passing along a series of leaks. "We called it 'feeding the animals,'" says Morris.

THE WIRETAP ON HEDRICK SMITH PROVIDES THE most evidence of Kissinger's direct role. The tap was authorized on June 4, 1969, the same day Smith reported in the *Times* that a summit meeting between Nixon and President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam—previously scheduled for June 8 at Midway Island—might result in an announcement that the number of American troops in Vietnam would be reduced. By that

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

late date, however, the Nixon Administration's tentative decision to begin withdrawing American troops had been widely reported. Of perhaps more significance was Smith's exclusive dispatch in the *Times* of the day before revealing that Nixon was willing to return Okinawa to Japanese control and withdraw American nuclear weapons from the American bases there. Smith did not report, however, the essence of the bargain, which assured continued American use of the Okinawa bases. The Smith story was published six days after issuance of top-secret National Security Decision Memorandum Number 13 by the White House. "Our fallback position was thus in print before our negotiations had even begun," Kissinger complained in his memoirs. Nixon also singled out the Smith story for complaint in his memoirs.

On June 4, Kissinger had a previously scheduled meeting with Hoover at the FBI, and before it Haig, ever the alert deputy, presented his boss with a memorandum (marked "Top Secret—Sensitive") summarizing some of the issues to be discussed. Kissinger was first to express his appreciation to Hoover and William Sullivan "for their outstanding support in recent weeks in uncovering security problems within the NSC," Haig wrote. Kissinger was also to ask Hoover "for his views on how we should proceed with Halperin, who has been involved in indiscretions and who obviously has a reputation for liberal views but who has yet to be firmly linked with a security breach." Finally, Kissinger was to ask Hoover "if he has any additional information or guidance which he feels would be helpful in this very difficult situation."

There was one other problem, Haig's memorandum suggested. Nixon was seemingly having second thoughts about the wiretapping, and Haig urged Kissinger to "inquire about the requirement for prolonging the taps, making it clear that the President wishes to terminate them as soon as possible." Haig added that it was his opinion that the wiretaps on Halperin and another NSC staff member "should be kept on for at least another two weeks so that a pattern of innocence can be firmly established." In Halperin's case, the wiretaps remained on until February of 1971, a total of twenty-one months, more than enough time to prove his innocence.

After that meeting, about which no memorandums have been made public, William Sullivan authorized the Smith wiretap, specifically mentioning Kissinger as the official who made the request—the only time Kissinger was so named in the FBI's wiretap files. Sullivan wrote, "Today Dr. Kissinger requested that a telephone surveillance be placed on Hedrick Smith, who has been in contact with individuals on whom we have telephone coverage in this case." In his 1974 Senate testimony, Kissinger discussed an FBI report that Smith had been overheard talking to Dan Davidson on wiretaps. But neither he nor any other government official was able to supply evidence linking those conversations to any of Smith's stories.

Smith's dispatches came at a trying time for Kissinger. There was renewed pressure from Nixon over leaks. And Mel Laird was still insisting on the implementation of his Vietnamization plan. That plan, which called for the South Vietnamese army to take over the function of American troops as they were withdrawn, was initially viewed by Kissinger as an insurmountable drawback to his Vietnam negotiating strategy. How could he negotiate a mutual withdrawal of United States and North Vietnamese forces when Laird and Nixon were beginning to withdraw troops unilaterally?

It seems clear, based on Kissinger's own statements to the press and to various inquiries, that Smith's two stories preoccupied Kissinger when he visited Hoover in his office at 9:30 A.M. on June 4. Yet, in his 1974 testimony to the Senate, Kissinger said he could not remember whether they came up. "I am confident I did not . . . request a tap from Mr. Hoover," Kissinger testified, "but what else was said in this conversation would be very hard for me to reconstruct. These conversations one has to see in the context. It is the wrong idea to assume that one went to Mr. Hoover who passively listened to descriptions of security violations and then reluctantly went along with orders. Usually what happened was that the Director would give one an enormous amount of alleged security violations to which one tried to make a more or less reasonable response." Hoover had died in 1972, so Kissinger could speak without fear of contradiction.

Kissinger had no fears about what he said over the telephone: he knew that William Sullivan and the others involved in the FBI would be terrified, as would any careful bureaucrat, at the prospect of confronting a superior in the White House with evidence of possible indiscretions. During the twenty-one months that Mort Halperin's home telephone was wiretapped, the FBI sent thirty-four letters to Kissinger, Nixon, and H. R. Haldeman, Nixon's chief of staff and closest aide, summarizing the information overheard. Nothing was reported, however, about an extensive phone conversation Halperin and Kissinger had on a Saturday afternoon in early August of 1969. By then, Halperin had been wiretapped for three months and no incriminating information had been obtained. Yet Kissinger had been increasingly isolating him from classified materials inside the NSC, and Halperin was on the verge of resignation. Kissinger spoke very frankly that Saturday in urging Halperin to stay, knowing that his remarks were being overheard, because he had placed the call to Halperin at his home. Kissinger's statements would have outraged President Nixon, if made available to him, and would have threatened Kissinger's Oval Office standing. In the FBI transcript of that August conversation, Kissinger was quoted as praising Halperin's work as extraordinary and urging him not to leave the White House. Kissinger even promised to talk about Halperin's role with Nixon and Attorney General Mitchell—a promise that he knew he could not keep—to see "if they feel we can't tailor something [for Halperin] right now."

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

The conversation was sheer hokum on Kissinger's part; his only concern was to ensure that Halperin kept his peace. Nonetheless, Kissinger obviously would not have held such a conversation if he thought there was any chance that the FBI would routinely forward a summary to Nixon. It is unlikely that the precise details of the arrangement between the top level of the FBI and Kissinger's office ever will be known, but Kissinger obviously felt free to talk on the telephone to those of his staff—and various reporters—whom he knew to be wiretapped. His enemy in all of this was not Hoover.

Al Haig's conversations also were insulated. None of his telephone talks with Bob Pursley, many of which, Pursley recalls, dealt with classified information, were included in the FBI telephone transcripts. (Pursley did discover, upon reviewing his transcripts years later, that the FBI had been quick, however, to raise doubts about him. In mid-1970, he had taken a brief vacation, his first in years, with his wife. On the morning after his return to work, Mrs. Pursley telephoned and asked him how it felt to be back. "Miserable," said Pursley, not unnaturally. "I wish I wasn't here." At this point in the transcript of the call, an FBI agent noted: "He appears to be a disgruntled employee." Similarly, Morton Halperin's wife, Ina, was constantly telling callers that her telephone was wiretapped. In one conversation with a close relative in the fall of 1969, Mrs. Halperin suddenly exclaimed, "You hear that beeping?" At this point in the FBI logs, the agent preparing the transcripts noted parenthetically: "There isn't any beeping on the line. Ina has a complex her phone is being tapped.")

In a conversation in 1973, conducted at the time on a not-for-attribution basis, William Sullivan told me that none of the wiretaps produced any evidence of NSC wrongdoing. "There wasn't one member of the staff who was disloyal to the country. But they were disloyal to Kissinger, and they were giving him real problems. Some of them began to disagree with him and they weren't with him." (Sullivan was killed in a hunting accident near his home in New Hampshire in November of 1977, six years after he resigned from the FBI.)

Richard Nixon, according to a transcript of a White House tape recording that was made public during the 1974 impeachment hearings, strongly suggested that it was Kissinger who urged the wiretapping. Discussing the wiretaps on Halperin and Tony Lake (who was not wiretapped until 1970), Nixon said, "I know that he [Kissinger] 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 bullshitting—the tapping was a very, very unproductive thing. . . ."

In his various public statements, Nixon has consistently said that his approval of the wiretaps was based on grounds of national security. Kissinger has also cited national security in defense of his involvement. During his 1974 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kissinger was asked whether any of his aides were fired because of indiscretions. His full answer, not included by the committee in its published hearings, amounted to innuendo. "As a result of this program, there were two violations that I remember," Kissinger testified. "In the case of one person, he was separated from the staff over a period of months in such a way that it did not appear that he'd been fired for a security violation. I thought it was an indiscretion. I did not want to blight his whole career, so first I had him transferred out of the National Security Council to another government position and suggested to him as a friend that he resign after a decent interval. . . . It was clearly an indiscretion, but I did not want to have him blighted."

Kissinger was referring to Dan Davidson, a fact privately conveyed to me years later by Al Haig. But Davidson was never accused of any leaks, nor was he transferred to another job, nor, he says, did he have a conversation with Kissinger in which he was advised to "resign after a decent interval." In fact, Davidson recalls being intensely loyal to Kissinger then. "At that early stage, most of us liked him very much," Davidson says. "He was a hypnotic guy." Davidson was told by Al Haig in mid-1969 that his resignation was desired, and he was offered his choice of a new post. He left government instead to begin practicing law in Washington.

In his classified testimony to the Senate, Kissinger also told of the second alleged security violation, which was Halperin's. "In the case of another person, we suddenly separated him from classified documents to a point he felt he wanted to resign, but that was an attempt on my part to minimize the damage to the individuals themselves," Kissinger said. "If they had been overwhelming security violations, we would have thrown them out. They were borderline cases, where you erred on the side of protecting the security but did not feel justified in blighting the whole career of the man."

In 1976, in testimony in connection with a suit filed by Halperin that year, Kissinger significantly altered his account. He testified that as of August, 1969, when he had the extended discussion with Halperin and urged him to stay on at the NSC, "I had no information that would make me—on security grounds—make me change my mind about keeping him." It was "my judgment" that Halperin was not a security risk, Kissinger said.

BY THE FALL OF 1969, KISSINGER HAD STRIPPED his staff of many of those who were deemed to be offensive to the man in the Oval Office. Halperin formally resigned in September, Sneider and Davidson were long gone. All left quietly. Coping with Nixon, pleasing him, and trying to find out what he really wanted were always the most important priorities for Kissinger. If his staff was too Jewish and too liberal for Nixon and his chief aides, Kissinger made the necessary adjustments.

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

More and more subservient, even fawning, to his patron, Kissinger was increasingly vicious and outspoken outside the Oval Office. The backbiting grew intense by the end of the year. Secretary of State Rogers was a "fag" who had some strange hold over the President; Mel Laird was a megalomaniac who constantly leaked anti-Kissinger stories to the press; and Richard Nixon was a secret drunk of dubious intelligence.

There was a steady stream of private invective from Kissinger, and his personal aides heard it all. One of his major obsessions in the first year was Bill Rogers. At one time Kissinger told his staff that a prominent Georgetown columnist had confided to him that Rogers was keeping a house in Georgetown with a young male paramour in it. (The aides knew that such stories were absurd but also felt that Kissinger to some degree wanted to believe them.) Morris and others who were trusted by Kissinger eventually ended up working on Kissinger's private diary, which was transcribed and edited daily. On some days, Morris says, the Kissinger entries filled fifteen pages—not with high-level diplomatic strategy but with low-level gossip.

"We caught glimpses of Nixon, Laird, Rogers, and Kissinger in action," Morris says. "Nixon drank exceptionally at night and there were many nights when you couldn't reach him at Camp David." The diary was treated as if it were the most sensitive document in the government—which it may have been. Morris recalls that it was stored in an electronically protected safe in Kissinger's office along with materials from the secret Paris negotiations with North Vietnam.

"It was a goldmine of bureaucratic duplicity and maneuver," Morris says. "When Henry went home at night, he didn't discuss policy; he discussed the nature of people. He is really interested in personalities and their weaknesses; he analyzed issues and people the way a good boxer analyzes his opponent's boxing style." The diary was replete with evidence that Kissinger privately held many of his colleagues in contempt, Morris says.

Morris often listened in on Kissinger's conversations with an obviously drunk Nixon. "There were many times when a cable would come in late and Henry would say, 'There's no sense waking him up—he'd be incoherent,'" Morris recalls. The young aide was frightened by the idea of a President who was not fully competent after sundown. He often wondered what would happen if the Soviet Union attacked at night.

Morris said nothing to his outside friends about such goings-on. "It's hard to explain," he said later. "It's a constant barrage. You go around taking it for granted that Nixon's nuts. Henry and others go around wringing their hands for the President and saying Rogers is a fag. After a while, you lose your perspective. You don't feel a sense of outrage. All of the things that you think about later—the drunkenness, the wiretapping—you've become inured to while in the White House. It isn't a matter of constant moral torment when you're there."

Kissinger on more than one occasion told his personal staff about his first formal White House reception and his first meeting with Mrs. Nixon. He naturally began to praise the President lavishly, but Mrs. Nixon leaned over and interrupted him by saying, "Haven't you seen through him yet?" Morris recalls that Kissinger would tell the anecdote to the staff and joke about it, "as if to say, 'This man is not stable.'"

"It's a curious paradox about Henry," Morris says. "Nobody schemed or planned more than Kissinger about his enemies—and yet nobody was as careless. He didn't really conceal his contempt for all of these people, except in face-to-face dealings."

Colonel Bob Pursley similarly recalls that Kissinger and Haig would seek his support, and the support of Laird, for a White House stratagem "by telling me, 'We've got a madman on our hands.' They'd always say that to me; it was a continual thing."

Just how serious was Nixon's drinking problem? Many of his former associates and aides, such as Charles W. Colson, dismiss its significance by saying that the President had a notoriously low capacity for alcohol, and would slur his words and appear to be somewhat drunk after one or two highballs. Yet John Ehrlichman recalls that he had refused to work on Nixon's presidential campaign in 1968 unless Nixon promised to stop drinking. "Nixon promised to lay off during the campaign and he did," Ehrlichman says. "There were times when he got drunk—no question about it. But it wasn't that frequent, and he had a sense of when he was on and when he was off."

Another close aide to Kissinger recalls, however, that Nixon always seemed to be "off" during his many weekends at the Florida White House in Key Biscayne. On those weekends, Nixon spent an inordinate amount of time drinking martinis with two old cronies, Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo and Robert Abplanalp. "To the extent there was a problem," the aide recalls, "it was very real in Key Biscayne." Kissinger's main concern during those Florida weekend trips, which were working weekends for the National Security Adviser and his staff, was avoiding social encounters with the Nixon entourage. "We always played hard to get for Nixon," the aide says; his job was to find a way to say no without saying no. On occasion, Nixon himself would telephone with a request, and Kissinger would go. One night in Miami, Nixon stopped an attractive woman as he left a restaurant—after having had a few drinks too many—and offered her a job in the White House. "She looks like she's built for you, Henry," the President said. The Kissinger aide learned of the encounter from a Secret Service man. "Hearing this kind of a thing made my veins hurt," the aide says. "The President of the United States, drunk in a restaurant, making crude remarks and engaging in familiarity with a strange woman in a public place—all clearly attributable to martinis . . . " Nonetheless, the aide says, "I didn't think of his drinking as a real problem—although you sort of wondered what would happen if there

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

The conversation was sheer hokum on Kissinger's part; his only concern was to ensure that Halperin kept his peace. Nonetheless, Kissinger obviously would not have held such a conversation if he thought there was any chance that the FBI would routinely forward a summary to Nixon. It is unlikely that the precise details of the arrangement between the top level of the FBI and Kissinger's office ever will be known, but Kissinger obviously felt free to talk on the telephone to those of his staff—and various reporters—whom he knew to be wiretapped. His enemy in all of this was not Hoover.

Al Haig's conversations also were insulated. None of his telephone talks with Bob Pursley, many of which, Pursley recalls, dealt with classified information, were included in the FBI telephone transcripts. (Pursley did discover, upon reviewing his transcripts years later, that the FBI had been quick, however, to raise doubts about him. In mid-1970, he had taken a brief vacation, his first in years, with his wife. On the morning after his return to work, Mrs. Pursley telephoned and asked him how it felt to be back. "Miserable," said Pursley, not unnaturally. "I wish I wasn't here." At this point in the transcript of the call, an FBI agent noted: "He appears to be a disgruntled employee." Similarly, Morton Halperin's wife, Ina, was constantly telling callers that her telephone was wiretapped. In one conversation with a close relative in the fall of 1969, Mrs. Halperin suddenly exclaimed, "You hear that beeping?" At this point in the FBI logs, the agent preparing the transcripts noted parenthetically: "There isn't any beeping on the line: Ina has a complex her phone is being tapped.")

In a conversation in 1973, conducted at the time on a not-for-attribution basis, William Sullivan told me that none of the wiretaps produced any evidence of NSC wrongdoing. "There wasn't one member of the staff who was disloyal to the country. But they were disloyal to Kissinger, and they were giving him real problems. Some of them began to disagree with him and they weren't with him." (Sullivan was killed in a hunting accident near his home in New Hampshire in November of 1977, six years after he resigned from the FBI.)

Richard Nixon, according to a transcript of a White House tape recording that was made public during the 1974 impeachment hearings, strongly suggested that it was Kissinger who urged the wiretapping. Discussing the wiretaps on Halperin and Tony Lake (who was not wiretapped until 1970), Nixon said, "I know that he [Kissinger] 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 bullshitting—the tapping was a very, very unproductive thing. . . ."

In his various public statements, Nixon has consistently said that his approval of the wiretaps was based on grounds of national security. Kissinger has also cited national security in defense of his involvement. During his 1974 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kissinger was asked whether any of his aides were fired because of indiscretions. His full answer, not included by the committee in its published hearings, amounted to innuendo. "As a result of this program, there were two violations that I remember," Kissinger testified. "In the case of one person, he was separated from the staff over a period of months in such a way that it did not appear that he'd been fired for a security violation. I thought it was an indiscretion. I did not want to blight his whole career, so first I had him transferred out of the National Security Council to another government position and suggested to him as a friend that he resign after a decent interval. . . . It was clearly an indiscretion, but I did not want to have him blighted."

Kissinger was referring to Dan Davidson, a fact privately conveyed to me years later by Al Haig. But Davidson was never accused of any leaks, nor was he transferred to another job, nor, he says, did he have a conversation with Kissinger in which he was advised to "resign after a decent interval." In fact, Davidson recalls being intensely loyal to Kissinger then. "At that early stage, most of us liked him very much," Davidson says. "He was a hypnotic guy." Davidson was told by Al Haig in mid-1969 that his resignation was desired, and he was offered his choice of a new post. He left government instead to begin practicing law in Washington.

In his classified testimony to the Senate, Kissinger also told of the second alleged security violation, which was Halperin's. "In the case of another person, we suddenly separated him from classified documents to a point he felt he wanted to resign, but that was an attempt on my part to minimize the damage to the individuals themselves," Kissinger said. "If they had been overwhelming security violations, we would have thrown them out. They were borderline cases, where you erred on the side of protecting the security but did not feel justified in blighting the whole career of the man."

In 1976, in testimony in connection with a suit filed by Halperin that year, Kissinger significantly altered his account. He testified that as of August, 1969, when he had the extended discussion with Halperin and urged him to stay on at the NSC, "I had no information that would make me—on security grounds—make me change my mind about keeping him." It was "my judgment" that Halperin was not a security risk, Kissinger said.

BY THE FALL OF 1969, KISSINGER HAD STRIPPED his staff of many of those who were deemed to be offensive to the man in the Oval Office. Halperin formally resigned in September, Sneider and Davidson were long gone. All left quietly. Coping with Nixon, pleasing him, and trying to find out what he really wanted were always the most important priorities for Kissinger. If his staff was too Jewish and too liberal for Nixon and his chief aides, Kissinger made the necessary adjustments.

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

More and more subservient, even fawning, to his patron, Kissinger was increasingly vicious and outspoken outside the Oval Office. The backbiting grew intense by the end of the year. Secretary of State Rogers was a "fag" who had some strange hold over the President; Mel Laird was a megalomaniac who constantly leaked anti-Kissinger stories to the press; and Richard Nixon was a secret drunk of dubious intelligence.

There was a steady stream of private invective from Kissinger, and his personal aides heard it all. One of his major obsessions in the first year was Bill Rogers. At one time Kissinger told his staff that a prominent Georgetown columnist had confided to him that Rogers was keeping a house in Georgetown with a young male paramour in it. (The aides knew that such stories were absurd but also felt that Kissinger to some degree wanted to believe them.) Morris and others who were trusted by Kissinger eventually ended up working on Kissinger's private diary, which was transcribed and edited daily. On some days, Morris says, the Kissinger entries filled fifteen pages—not with high-level diplomatic strategy but with low-level gossip.

"We caught glimpses of Nixon, Laird, Rogers, and Kissinger in action," Morris says. "Nixon drank exceptionally at night and there were many nights when you couldn't reach him at Camp David." The diary was treated as if it were the most sensitive document in the government—which it may have been. Morris recalls that it was stored in an electronically protected safe in Kissinger's office along with materials from the secret Paris negotiations with North Vietnam.

"It was a goldmine of bureaucratic duplicity and maneuver," Morris says. "When Henry went home at night, he didn't discuss policy; he discussed the nature of people. He is really interested in personalities and their weaknesses; he analyzed issues and people the way a good boxer analyzes his opponent's boxing style." The diary was replete with evidence that Kissinger privately held many of his colleagues in contempt, Morris says.

Morris often listened in on Kissinger's conversations with an obviously drunk Nixon. "There were many times when a cable would come in late and Henry would say, 'There's no sense waking him up—he'd be incoherent,'" Morris recalls. The young aide was frightened by the idea of a President who was not fully competent after sundown. He often wondered what would happen if the Soviet Union attacked at night.

Morris said nothing to his outside friends about such goings-on. "It's hard to explain," he said later. "It's a constant barrage. You go around taking it for granted that Nixon's nuts. Henry and others go around wringing their hands for the President and saying Rogers is a fag. After a while, you lose your perspective. You don't feel a sense of outrage. All of the things that you think about later—the drunkenness, the wiretapping—you've become inured to while in the White House. It isn't a matter of constant moral torment when you're there."

Kissinger on more than one occasion told his personal staff about his first formal White House reception and his first meeting with Mrs. Nixon. He naturally began to praise the President lavishly, but Mrs. Nixon leaned over and interrupted him by saying, "Haven't you seen through him yet?" Morris recalls that Kissinger would tell the anecdote to the staff and joke about it, "as if to say, 'This man is not stable.'"

"It's a curious paradox about Henry," Morris says. "Nobody schemed or planned more than Kissinger about his enemies—and yet nobody was as careless. He didn't really conceal his contempt for all of these people, except in face-to-face dealings."

Colonel Bob Pursley similarly recalls that Kissinger and Haig would seek his support, and the support of Laird, for a White House stratagem "by telling me, 'We've got a madman on our hands.' They'd always say that to me; it was a continual thing."

Just how serious was Nixon's drinking problem? Many of his former associates and aides, such as Charles W. Colson, dismiss its significance by saying that the President had a notoriously low capacity for alcohol, and would slur his words and appear to be somewhat drunk after one or two highballs. Yet John Ehrlichman recalls that he had refused to work on Nixon's presidential campaign in 1968 unless Nixon promised to stop drinking. "Nixon promised to lay off during the campaign and he did," Ehrlichman says. "There were times when he got drunk—no question about it. But it wasn't that frequent, and he had a sense of when he was on and when he was off."

Another close aide to Kissinger recalls, however, that Nixon always seemed to be "off" during his many weekends at the Florida White House in Key Biscayne. On those weekends, Nixon spent an inordinate amount of time drinking martinis with two old cronies, Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo and Robert Abplanalp. "To the extent there was a problem," the aide recalls, "it was very real in Key Biscayne." Kissinger's main concern during those Florida weekend trips, which were working weekends for the National Security Adviser and his staff, was avoiding social encounters with the Nixon entourage. "We always played hard to get for Nixon," the aide says; his job was to find a way to say no without saying no. On occasion, Nixon himself would telephone with a request, and Kissinger would go. One night in Miami, Nixon stopped an attractive woman as he left a restaurant—after having had a few drinks too many—and offered her a job in the White House. "She looks like she's built for you, Henry," the President said. The Kissinger aide learned of the encounter from a Secret Service man. "Hearing this kind of a thing made my veins hurt," the aide says. "The President of the United States, drunk in a restaurant, making crude remarks and engaging in familiarity with a strange woman in a public place—all clearly attributable to martinis . . . " Nonetheless, the aide says, "I didn't think of his drinking as a real problem—although you sort of wondered what would happen if there

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

was ever a nuclear threat." Most of the time, he says, "it was one of the things you knew about in terms of handling papers—'Oh, no, this is not the time to get him to sign these.'"

Whatever the truth, Kissinger's personal aides—who rarely saw Nixon—were convinced that they were dealing with a defective President, and Kissinger did little to reassure them.

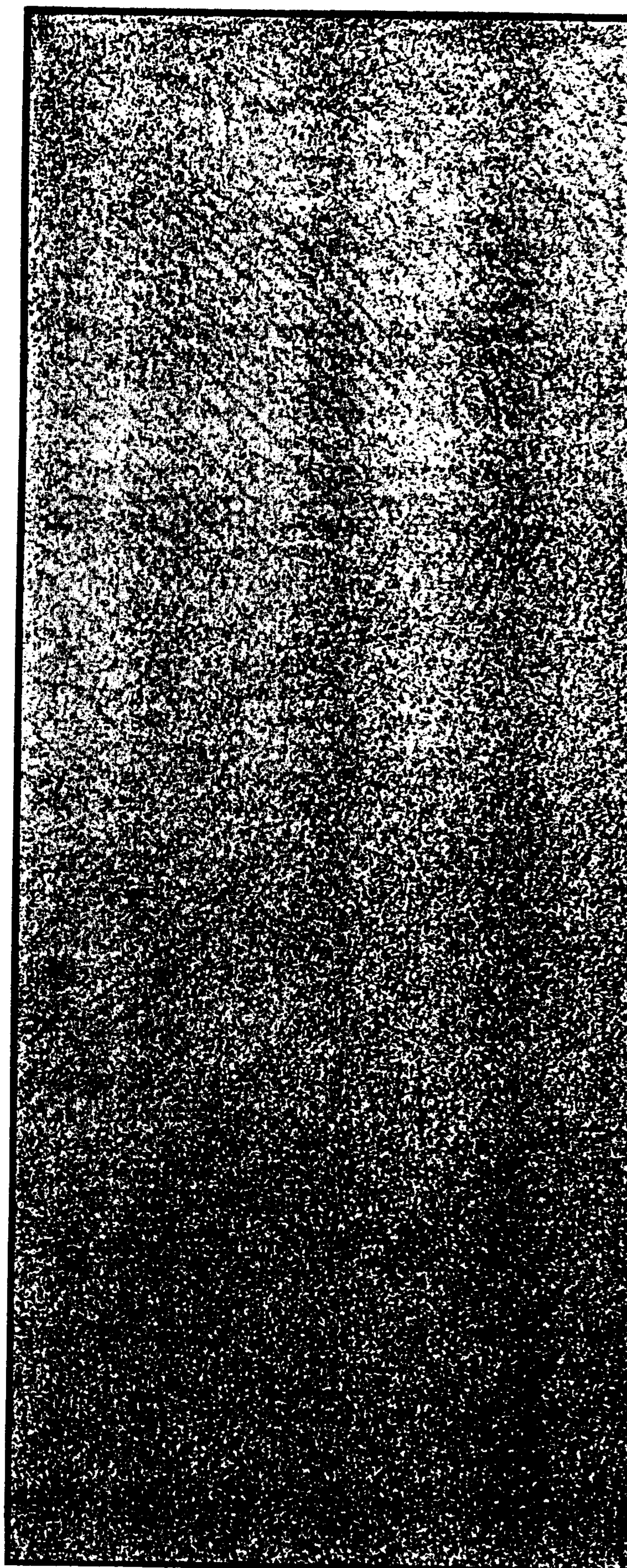
Keeping certain people cut off from the flow of information was a way of life in the Kissinger White House. Most of Kissinger's staff in the Old Executive Office Building simply did not know what he was doing. Mort Halperin recalls that the process began early. "The President's trip to Asia [in July and August] was planned and conceived without the guy in charge of Asia knowing about it. The guy working on Vietnam did not know about the President's letter to Ho Chi Minh [in July]. The Kissinger operation right from the beginning was a one-man operation with a couple of staff guys."

At a much more trusted level were Kissinger's personal staff aides, who included at varying times in 1969 Eagleburger, Haig, and Tony Lake. In August, William Watts, one of Kissinger's former colleagues from the 1968 Rockefeller presidential campaign, arrived to replace Dick Moose as staff secretary. He, too, was given a position of trust, and spent much of his time in the West Wing basement offices when Kissinger was traveling. These men not only saw all of the highly classified documents that streamed into Kissinger's office but were also very much aware of his effort to isolate other staff members and the bureaucracy from the decision-making process. These men further saw many of the FBI documents that were sent by Hoover to Kissinger, including the wiretap summaries. The office secretary, and occasionally one of the personal aides, monitored Kissinger's telephone conversations with the President and other officials in and out of the White House. Kissinger's personal staff was also responsible for drafting and monitoring the flow of memorandums from Kissinger to Nixon.

Many of the NSC staff members got a chance to see Nixon in action in the first few months, usually at the National Security Council meetings. Nixon was impressive. Staff members recalled that he seemed to have done his homework and understood the intricacies of the foreign-policy issues under discussion.

Within a few months, however, as Nixon and Kissinger tightened their hold on the bureaucracy, the formal meetings were recast as caricatures—ritualistic devices by which the President could be exposed to his Cabinet and his senior advisers under tightly controlled conditions. By mid-1969, Kissinger was ordering his staff to include the admonishment that "no decisions will be made here" in presidential briefing papers submitted prior to the NSC meetings.

By then, too, Nixon seemed to be giving far less attention to the formal meetings, and far less attention to his



Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

homework—the many studies and documents prepared by the NSC staff. The talking papers prepared for Nixon prior to formal Security Council meetings soon began to include word-for-word dialogue. One staff aide vividly recalls the first of many such papers he wrote for Nixon: "It was like a first-grade primer—'Run, Spot, Run' kind of thing," the aide says. In his script, Nixon began the meeting by saying, "Gentlemen: Today we are dealing with etc., etc. There are four issues: first, we have etc., etc." After stating the issues, Nixon was to call on Kissinger and ask him to summarize the available options. When Kissinger had done so, the script called for Nixon to say, "Thank you, Dr. Kissinger." Then Nixon was to say, "Now it's Mr. So-and-so's turn," the aide says, and bring in a Cabinet member for discussion. The astonishing thing, the aide recalls, was that Nixon followed the script exactly.

Kissinger's NSC staff mushroomed to 114 members and secretaries by fall. One addition was particularly vital to the National Security Adviser—that of Peter W. Rodman, his former student from Harvard University. From the moment of Rodman's arrival, some of Kissinger's close aides understood that his mission was to assemble and prepare the documents for Kissinger's memoirs. "He indexed everything that came in," Roger Morris recalls. Morris later became convinced that another Rodman mission was to be ready to "evacuate the personal files" within hours if Kissinger ever felt that he was on the verge of being forced out by Haldeman and Ehrlichman. Even as early as 1970, Morris says, Rodman was routinely shipping the most sensitive Kissinger files to Nelson Rockefeller's estate at Pocantico Hills, New York.

By then, the bureaucratic intrigue and personal betrayal in the National Security Council were taking their toll. "There was a dawning recognition that this was a frightening place," Larry Lynn recalls. "It was like walking into a room with a bad odor. After a while you get inured. You realized that this is not the way the government should work. I had to do a lot of things out of loyalty to Henry that I preferred not to do—the secrecy, the confinement of activities to certain agencies, the confinement of communications to certain people, the centralization of power. Henry used to kid me a lot. He used to say, 'You've got too much integrity.' "

Many of the young NSC staff members had joined Kissinger in the hope that, somehow, he and Nixon would do what Lyndon Johnson could not: reverse America's policy in Southeast Asia, as Nixon had promised in the 1968 campaign. Instead, to the dismay of the aides, the White House came perilously close in the fall of 1969 to a drastic escalation of the war. Nixon and Kissinger planned an operation—code-named Duck Hook—that would have led to the mining of Haiphong harbor and the B-52 bombing of major cities, including Hanoi and Haiphong. The offensive was canceled at the last moment by Nixon, after a huge anti-war demonstration in Washington on October 15. The young aides clung to hope even as such planning continued. Kissinger began his secret peace talks in Paris with Le Duc Tho, a member of North Vietnam's ruling politburo, and there were renewed contacts with the People's Republic of China. In late April of 1970, Nixon and Kissinger decided to invade Cambodia. Tony Lake, Roger Morris, and Bill Watts immediately resigned. Larry Lynn's resignation came later. The aides were convinced that the White House's policy of threats and escalation in Cambodia and elsewhere would not work; the war was still in the south, and had to be resolved there. Inside the White House that spring there was talk not of negotiation but of victory. Nixon and Kissinger were determined to show Hanoi's leaders—and the Soviet Union—that they were willing to risk all to bring North Vietnam to its knees.

THE WHITE HOUSE WAS STUNNED BY THE INTENSITY of the outcry over the President's decision to extend the war to Cambodia. The nation was suddenly alive, once again, with protests against the war and against the men running it. The pressure grew on May 3, when Bill Beecher of the *Times* reported that Nixon had renewed the bombing of North Vietnam; the President had ordered the most intensive raids since the bombing-halt agreement that was negotiated by the Johnson Administration shortly before the 1968 elections. Kissinger had unsuccessfully sought to prevent the article's publication with a personal plea to Max Frankel, Washington bureau chief of the *Times*, and when that failed, he and Nixon turned again to wiretaps.

On the evening of May 2, shortly after Kissinger first learned of the Beecher story, Beecher's article was cited as a "serious security violation" by Al Haig in a formal request to the FBI for four more wiretaps. This time Kissinger and Nixon were going for broke, seeking to learn who inside the administration was loyal and who was not. Bob Pursley was to be wiretapped again at home and in his office, the real target clearly being Mel Laird. Richard Pedersen, a State Department counselor who was known to be close to Bill Rogers, was also to be wiretapped at home and at work; he shared two private lines on his desk with the Secretary of State. William H. Sullivan (no kin to the FBI deputy), the former ambassador to Laos who was then a deputy assistant secretary of state, was on the list. And finally, Bill Beecher, whose articles since early 1969 had been a source of grief for the White House, was to be wiretapped, Haig told the FBI, at home and at the *New York Times* offices. However, taps through the large switchboard at a newspaper or a government agency were not feasible, and were not installed. The FBI wiretaps on the four men stayed on until February 10, 1971.

Kissinger explained in his 1974 testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that all four men were wiretapped because they had access "to the information, to

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

sensitive information that had leaked," and thus could logically be considered suspects. In fact, as Kissinger had to know, none of the four—not even Beecher—was aware of the real secret involved in the May 3 story: Laird had not authorized the bombing but had been bypassed.

On May 9, the White House wiretaps produced a conversation between Mort Halperin and Daniel Ellsberg, a former Pentagon official and Vietnam analyst for the Rand Corporation who had worked briefly for Kissinger early in 1969. Ellsberg was renowned inside the government as a former hawk who had turned against the war, and who now was telling all who would listen that the war could not be won. Halperin told Ellsberg, so the wiretap revealed, that he had decided after the invasion of Cambodia to sever all ties to the National Security Council. At the time, Halperin still was a consultant to the White House. Halperin also told Ellsberg, according to an FBI transcript of their talk, that "the major and most certain consequence" of the Cambodian invasion "is that a large number of Cambodian civilians will be killed and labeled Viet Cong." Two days later, J. Edgar Hoover rushed Nixon and Kissinger "Eyes Only" letters reporting Halperin's views. Earlier, Halperin had been overheard informing a caller that Mel Laird and Bill Rogers had disagreed with Nixon's decision on Cambodia. Halperin also said, as Hoover reported to the White House, that "in his opinion the President had never had the intention of getting out of Vietnam." He added, "The only effective way to oppose the present policy is to elect a Congress which will stop the war by cutting off funds."

Nixon, Kissinger, and Haig have given conflicting accounts of what happened next, but it is known that the Halperin intercepts led to a frenzy of high-level action. On May 12, the FBI was requested by Haig, who cited Kissinger's name, to wiretap two more members of the NSC staff—Tony Lake, who had announced his forthcoming resignation, and Winston Lord, a Halperin protégé who had proved his mettle in Kissinger's and Haig's eyes by not joining the others in resigning over Cambodia. Lake and Lord were wiretapped for the next nine months.

On May 13, Hoover attended a White House meeting with Nixon and Haldeman, and perhaps others, at which he was told to deal only with Haldeman on the White House wiretaps from then on. Kissinger and his office were no longer to be included on the mailing list for wiretap summaries. On that day, too, Hoover provided the White House with some of the FBI's verbatim logs of the Halperin wiretaps upon which the summaries had been made.

At this point, Kissinger had reached a new height of power and authority inside the Nixon White House, and it was inconceivable that Nixon would punish him by stripping him of direct access to the wiretap information. One obvious factor in the procedural change was Tony Lake, who was going to remain on the NSC staff for the next few months, and thus might learn of FBI reports on his own wiretap—just as he had learned of the wiretaps on others. Similarly, Winston Lord was going to be playing a far greater role in Kissinger's immediate office, something that Kissinger surely knew, and would also be exposed to the FBI records. Lake was wiretapped not for any indiscretion but because of what he knew and the White House's fear that he would begin talking—which he did not. Lord had been brought into the National Security Council by Halperin, for whom he had worked in the Pentagon, and was thus a prima facie suspect in the hysteria over Mort Halperin that persisted in the Oval Office.

What is baffling about the history of the White House bureaucratic maneuvering on May 13 is how all the principals lied about it in subsequent investigations and managed to get away with the lies. President Nixon told J. Edgar Hoover, as reported in an FBI memorandum, that Haldeman was to be the sole recipient of the wiretap summaries "inasmuch as the President is anxious to cut down leaks that are occurring at the present time." In his deposition in the Halperin wiretap lawsuit, however, Nixon volunteered a different reason for making the change: "General Haig came in to see me. He expressed great concern about Dr. Kissinger's very emotional and very concerned reactions to the Cambodian action, not that he was opposing it . . . He said we have simply got to get some of the load off. . . . He wanted it transferred to someone else and suggested that it might be Mr. Haldeman." But Haig, in his deposition, said that he had learned of the switch in policy only when Kissinger told him about it. Kissinger "said the decision has been made that we are out of it and there was a decision that I welcomed," Haig testified. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee a few months earlier, however, Haig acknowledged, "I had urged Henry to disassociate the National Security Council staff, meaning me or anybody else, from what was essentially an internal-security matter. . . . I know he either took that matter up with the President or Mr. Haldeman or somebody outside of our office, and he informed me that we would in fact be out of it." Kissinger, in his Senate testimony, explained that the transfer to Haldeman's office "was no climactic event. During the course of the spring it had become clear to me that while I was getting occasional reports, I was in no position to do anything with these reports and I would just look at them and throw them into my out basket. I, therefore, pointed out on a number of occasions to the President that my office would serve best if it concentrated on foreign-policy matters and if internal-security matters were shifted somewhere else." After Cambodia, Kissinger said, "when I had mass resignations from my staff . . . I believed then that it was probably decided that the combination of my preference and some of the difficulties that had existed on my staff made it desirable to accede to my recommendation and shift it to another office. I was informed of this as a routine matter several days later. . . . The President never spoke to me about it."

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Kissinger did not testify about a communication between his office and John Mitchell that may have explained why he was anxious to get out of the wiretap business. In an interview with the FBI after the Watergate scandal broke out, Mitchell recalled discussing the White House wiretaps with either Haig or Kissinger or both. The FBI quoted Mitchell as agreeing with Haig and/or Kissinger that "the wiretaps could become 'explosive'" and that the whole wiretap operation was "a dangerous game we were playing." Mitchell later told me that, in his opinion, Kissinger simply "wanted to get out" of the wiretap operations that spring. "He was just ducking—running for cover," Mitchell said.

Exactly what provoked the procedural change remains a mystery. The change did remove Kissinger from direct control of the wiretap operation. By then, his NSC staff had been purged: those who were malcontents or disaffected had already left his office or were in the process of resigning. Morris, Lake, Watts, and Lynn would be replaced over the next few months by aides who were far less mercurial, independent, and brilliant—but far more trustworthy, from Kissinger's point of view. The new NSC aides would learn to follow orders without question. Cambodia was a watershed for Kissinger; no longer would he permit himself to become personally fond of those on his staff as he had of Lake and Morris. Kissinger also began to delegate to Al Haig much more of the work in handling the NSC staff members and their papers.

BY JUNE, HAIG, NOW A BRIGADIER GENERAL, had finally been appointed as Kissinger's deputy and was firmly in charge of the day-to-day work of the National Security Council staff. Kissinger continued to operate his office on the same principle: ruthless exclusion of staff members from any contact with Richard Nixon. He was able to do so in mid-1970 with one exception: Alexander Haig. Haig's relationship with Nixon had become close after Cambodia, a period in which Haig was outspoken inside the White House in defense of the invasion. Haig's militarism and his hard-line approach to foreign-policy problems, which Kissinger had seized upon as a shield, were attractive and reassuring to Nixon. Haig began appearing more frequently on Nixon's appointments calendar, as maintained by the Secret Service, in early April of 1970. One of Kissinger's personal aides recalls, with a visible shudder, the first time the President telephoned Haig directly: "There was more tension than I can ever recall in that office," he says. Kissinger was in his outer office, conferring with his secretary, Julie Pineau, when Nixon's direct line rang. "Julie picked it up," the aide says, "and Henry started walking back to his office. [Kissinger always took the President's calls in privacy.] Julie said, 'It's for you, General Haig.' Haig went to his office and Henry stood by the door [of Haig's office] as Haig and Nixon talked." After a moment or two, the aide says, Kissinger resignedly "walked into his office and shut the door. He stayed in there for hours." Haig, meanwhile, was "drenched in sweat" by the time he concluded the presidential call. The aide was convinced that neither Haig nor Kissinger discussed the call that day. "From Henry's point of view, someone else now had access to the President," the aide says—and thus Kissinger had suffered a loss of his personal power.

Kissinger's concern about Haig's rise in influence must have created doubts, but he could not afford to turn on Haig openly, for the same reason that Nixon eventually was unable to turn on Kissinger: each knew too much about the other. Kissinger knew that Haig was a double-dealer who had ingratiated himself with Nixon and Haldeman and other senior aides by savaging Kissinger behind his back and spying on him. But Kissinger also knew that Haig's expertise on the Pentagon was invaluable if he and Nixon were going to maintain their ability to circumvent Laird and Pursley and directly order military action in the Middle East or in Southeast Asia. Haig could also be trusted to execute orders conscientiously and discreetly in the back channel. Haig, on his part, was aware of the complications in the Nixon–Kissinger relationship in a way no one else in the White House could be: he was constantly hearing each man's complaints about the other. Nixon did enjoy the savaging of Kissinger that repeatedly went on in his office, Haig knew, but the President also realized that among his aides only Kissinger had the intellectual stamina and the deviousness to be successful at conducting simultaneous back-channel negotiations with the Soviets and the Chinese. Haig also understood in early 1971 that future promotions lay with Kissinger as much as with the President.

Kissinger and Haig also shared knowledge about the White House wiretapping that, they knew, would cause serious—and perhaps fatal—problems for themselves and the Nixon presidency if made public. The wiretapping must have been particularly sensitive for Kissinger in early 1971, for the main target of the White House program—Morton Halperin—was a constant reminder to Nixon, Mitchell, and Haldeman of Kissinger's poor judgment in initially filling his office with liberals and Democrats who were not loyal to Nixon and his policies. Kissinger was saying little by early 1971, at least to the NSC staff, about Halperin and the three close aides who had resigned over Cambodia—Roger Morris, Tony Lake, and Bill Watts. But Haig could be irrational about them. The three were "traitors" to Kissinger and the NSC staff, Haig told one NSC newcomer in a rage, and Halperin was a "Communist." Haig had a special reason for being exceedingly angry with Halperin: he knew what the former Kissinger aide was saying about him on the telephone. In one conversation with a former colleague, for example, Halperin depicted Haig as a "blabbermouth who hears everything. . . . all phone conversations to the President and everything."

The wiretapping remained an important program for

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Kissinger and Haig through early 1971. Kissinger no longer received direct "Eyes Only" letters from J. Edgar Hoover summarizing important conversations, but he was still very much in the flow. The conduit was Haig, who continued to maintain the NSC's wiretap files and continued to visit FBI headquarters to read verbatim transcripts of conversations. William Sullivan, the FBI assistant director, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Haig had visited his office "about twelve to eighteen times between May, 1969, and February, 1971," when the wiretaps were turned off at Hoover's request. Sullivan, whose memory seemed to grow more vague every time he was ordered to testify, also told the committee that his estimate of the number of Haig's visits was "a guess." Asked specifically whether Haig continued to visit his office to read transcripts after May of 1970—the time by which Haig and Kissinger, according to their repeated testimony, had ended their active role—Sullivan said: "Yes, he did come to my office after May, 1970."

Just why Haig and Kissinger were so adamant in denying involvement with the wiretap program after that date is not clear. Whatever stigma—moral, legal, or other—they felt for having participated in the program would not be erased by their having stopped midway.

THE WIRETAP ON MORT HALPERIN'S HOME TELEphone was by far the most significant. Halperin, no liberal when he joined Kissinger's staff, was increasingly outspoken in his opposition to Nixon's and Kissinger's Vietnam policies after he left the White House. By mid-1970, he was a member of the foreign-policy group advising Senator Edmund S. Muskie, of Maine, the Democrat who was considered to be Nixon's strongest challenger for the presidency in 1972. FBI summaries sent to Bob Haldeman in the fall and early winter of 1970 consistently reported on Halperin's wiretap, and showed the former Kissinger aide to be heavily involved in Democratic and anti-Nixon politicking. On October 14, for example, Haldeman was told by Hoover that Halperin had discussed publishing an article on the workings of the National Security Council with a reporter for a German newsmagazine—a prospect that must have filled Kissinger with dread. A few weeks later, Halperin published a trenchant analysis of Vietnam policy in *The New York Times*. Nixon was refusing to force a political settlement on Saigon, Halperin wrote, and his Vietnamization policy "will at best lead to an indefinite presence in Vietnam of thousands of American troops. It could well drive the President to massive escalation, the mining of Haiphong Harbor and saturation bombing of North Vietnam." Such escalation was still a subject of constant debate among Nixon, Kissinger, and key aides. The men at the top in the White House had to conclude that Halperin had somehow learned of the planning. Halperin's essay in the *Times* undoubtedly helped ensure that the wiretap on Winston Lord, who had become one of Kissinger's personal aides after Cambodia, would remain active until the very end. Six days after publication of the Halperin assessment, Hoover reported to Haldeman that Halperin had been in contact with Leslie Gelb, a former Pentagon aide to Clark M. Clifford, Lyndon Johnson's secretary of defense, and Paul C. Warnke, a Clifford deputy, and the three had discussed a Muskie advisory-group meeting on "China policy."

In early December came another FBI report on Halperin, this one dealing with a planned trip to Moscow by Senator Muskie. The trip had been recommended—so Halperin told Gelb in a conversation monitored by the FBI—by Averell Harriman, an outspoken critic of Nixon's policies. Harriman so alarmed the White House that the FBI had been instructed to report verbatim every conversation he held with Tony Lake. On December 30, Haldeman received another FBI report on Halperin and Gelb revealing that Bob Pursley, who was also being wiretapped at his home, had sent some papers to Clark Clifford's office. Gelb told Halperin that Clifford had asked that he come to his office to look over "about twenty pieces of paper that Pursley sent over." Gelb, Halperin, and Pursley had worked closely together in the Pentagon during the last years of the Johnson Administration, and also shared detailed knowledge of the conclusions of the Pentagon Papers. The papers, a 7,000-page top-secret study of the history of America's involvement in Vietnam, had been undertaken in 1967 at the request of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, and assigned to Gelb, then deputy director of the Defense Department policy-planning staff.

The Halperin wiretap reports were extremely useful not only to Haldeman, who maintained strong control over all of the White House political operations, but also to Kissinger, who was obviously informed of Muskie's foreign-policy planning and of the fact that Halperin was still in touch with current NSC staff members. In early November, the FBI reported that Winston Lord had made uncomplimentary remarks about Kissinger and Nixon on his home telephone. A summary of that conversation, as published by the House Judiciary Committee, did not give further details, but Lord was still in touch with Mort Halperin and, according to Halperin's wiretap logs, would occasionally share some gossip with him. One of Kissinger's personal aides depicts this period as one of "general paranoia" inside Kissinger's office.

The stream of secrets was intense. There were the bad

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

secrets, dealing with the continuing White House wiretaps. There were the good secrets, such as the back-channel negotiations with China and with the Soviet Union that would lead to breakthroughs—without any State Department involvement—before the year was out. And there were the routine secrets, the enormous flow of documents and cables that were handled by Kissinger and his staff as he continuously expanded his influence. As the flow of secrets intensified, so did Kissinger's concern about the security of his immediate office. His telephones were still being repeatedly swept for signs of wiretapping, but Kissinger insisted that such surveillance not be placed on a routine basis with any single agency. Special teams from the Secret Service, CIA, FBI, or National Security Agency would be summoned to his office at random and on short notice to inspect the telephones, raising the inevitable question among Kissinger's staff: Who was the enemy? One aide, asked why Kissinger did not simply permanently assign the FBI to monitor his phones, responded: "Who trusted Hoover?"

In 1974 testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kissinger repeatedly sought to minimize his interest at this period in the White House wiretap program. "After May of 1970," he said, "I had no basis for knowing whether a tap had been initiated or was continuing. . . . I construed my instructions from Mr. Haldeman to mean that my tangential connection with the program was being terminated." Kissinger testified that in mid-October of 1970, when a second wiretap was authorized for Hal Sonnenfeldt, who was then Kissinger's closest personal friend on the NSC staff, his role was even more tangential. ". . . it is hard to imagine the flood of material that goes across my desk. I am apt to look at something and say this is for somebody else and throw it into my out basket. Most of these documents are not noted for extraordinary precision." The less-than-precise document in question in Sonnenfeldt's case, however, was an FBI summary of a wiretap on the Israeli Embassy in which Richard N. Perle, an aide to Senator Henry Jackson, was overheard discussing classified information that had been supplied to him by someone on the National Security Council staff. Hoover, following normal practice with sensitive materials from embassy wiretaps, had sent the document to Kissinger. Kissinger hesitated a few days. Then, despite his insistence that he was out of the internal-security business after May of 1970, he forwarded the material to Haldeman, who immediately telephoned Hoover, according to FBI documents, and ordered that the FBI be assigned to determine which NSC staffer was in contact with Richard Perle.

Haldeman and Nixon must have hit the roof. In a telephone call on October 15, 1970, to Hoover, Haldeman invoked the name of Henry Kissinger in asking for another wiretap on Sonnenfeldt. Kissinger had to realize that Haldeman and Hoover would suspect Sonnenfeldt, who was known from previous wiretaps to have close ties to the Israelis as well as to Perle. Sonnenfeldt, a former State Department intelligence official, had been repeatedly investigated by the FBI for other suspected leaks early in his career, and Kissinger, as he told the Senate committee, was aware that Sonnenfeldt had "been the subject of a malicious campaign by a group of individuals who had been out to get him for a long time." But Al Haig was now part of that group—another fact Kissinger surely knew. Sonnenfeldt had been among Haig's early rivals in 1969 for the job as assistant to Kissinger; that, plus Sonnenfeldt's continued closeness to Kissinger—despite the mistreatment Kissinger handed out—was enough for Haig to mark him permanently as the enemy. It was inconceivable that Kissinger would not realize the consequences of his act in turning over the Israeli Embassy wiretap to Haldeman, who would inevitably link Sonnenfeldt, a Jew, to the intercepted conversation. Kissinger was, in essence, turning in his closest remaining friend on his staff. It had to be, at best, a painful moment. Kissinger handled questions about the Sonnenfeldt wiretap from the Senate committee in his usual fashion: he dissembled. "I have no recollection of this at all," he testified. "All that could have happened is that the FBI sent over something off a tap on the Israeli Embassy which I did not think was relevant to my concern and on which I wrote, 'Give this to Haldeman.' " The committee members apparently accepted that explanation.

MORT HALPERIN'S WIRETAP NOT ONLY PROVIDED valuable political information about Senator Muskie's foreign-policy planning, as relayed by Les Gelb and others, but also enabled the White House to learn more about the one former insider who truly was capable of leaking vital secrets—Daniel Ellsberg.

Ellsberg, like Halperin, was a source of embarrassment for Kissinger, who had permitted him—despite his dovish reputation—to draft one of the administration's first options papers on the Vietnam War. Ellsberg had spent the month of March, 1969, in Washington, working quietly on Vietnam issues for the White House. He had worked with Kissinger in South Vietnam in the middle 1960s, and the men had been impressed with each other. Kissinger would tell his colleagues that he had "learned more about Vietnam" from Ellsberg than from any other American. Ellsberg thought Kissinger understood, as he had come to, that the war was unwinnable. During the twenty-one months of the wiretap on Halperin, Ellsberg was over-

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

heard fifteen times by the FBI. Their conversations revolved around Vietnam and what both men correctly perceived as the administration's secret plan to escalate the war. Halperin was careful, of course, on his telephone, but Ellsberg was not. He talked openly about drug use and sex. It is not known how Nixon, Haldeman, or Mitchell reacted to the connection of Ellsberg, drugs, and Morton Halperin; such revelations, however, could not have enhanced Kissinger's reputation as an employer of prudent aides. Halperin and Ellsberg knew literally hundreds of government secrets, ranging from the most specific information about America's nuclear-targeting procedures to the working of the National Security Agency's far-flung electronic eavesdropping operations. The White House's concern was not limited, however, to past secrets that Ellsberg and Halperin could expose; the men at the top were worried about what Ellsberg and Halperin thought the administration's future war policy was. Late in the summer of 1969, Ellsberg had visited with Halperin, who was still a White House consultant, to share his insights into the war policy, and it was then, Ellsberg recalls, that Halperin first informed him of the B-52 bombing of Cambodia and of a secret warning by Kissinger to the Soviets about escalation in Vietnam. Halperin also described Kissinger's repeated studies on the mining of Haiphong harbor, and speculated that Richard Nixon would not go through the 1972 election without putting his escalation plan into effect.

Both men knew that the Johnson Administration had much earlier sought to bully North Vietnam into accepting a defeat in the south. Diplomatic documents, still unpublished then, showed that Ho Chi Minh was warned in August of 1964 that unless his nation ceased its support of the Viet Cong in the south, "it can expect to continue to suffer the consequences." The warning, delivered by J. Blair Seaborn, the Canadian member of the International Control Commission, came a few days after American planes bombed the north for the first time, in retaliation for what Washington said was a North Vietnamese attack on American warships in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Ellsberg had been officially aware of the Seaborn mission, and he recalls the response to the threat: within months, one of the best North Vietnamese battalions had begun infiltrating the south. "They did it when they were staring right down the barrel at LBJ's threats," he says. He was convinced after his talks with Halperin that Nixon and Kissinger were going to make the same threats with the same results. Ellsberg began to brood about doing what Halperin would not—talk publicly against the war.

Over the next year, he began to meet privately with influential journalists and business groups to attempt to describe what he thought was the real Nixon strategy. His message was that Nixon's coercion strategy was a contingency plan that would go into effect only if the threats made against the North Vietnamese did not work. "I wasn't saying," Ellsberg recalls, "that they had a conscious plan that on a certain date they would enlarge the war. Escalation was not in their thoughts, but they were committing themselves to threats that would fail." Ellsberg told his audiences that the administration was being honest, to a degree, in publicly claiming that it did not want to enlarge the war and did not expect to do so. But there was a missing link, one he sought futilely to provide to his listeners: "They were making explicit threats which they expected to be effective without being carried out, and it was this that they were not hinting at or telling anybody." No one paid much attention—except in the White House.

In September of 1970, Kissinger agreed to meet with Ellsberg at San Clemente. Why Kissinger did so is not clear—needless to say, Ellsberg was not mentioned in the first volume of Kissinger's memoirs. Whatever Kissinger's motive, there was nothing outwardly unseemly about their meeting: as of September, 1970, Ellsberg had yet to be linked to any leak of classified materials and was widely known inside the government as a leading theorist on decision-making. The appointment coincided with a burgeoning crisis over the PLO and Jordan in the Middle East. Kissinger began, Ellsberg recalls, by saying, "I'm afraid Rogers's policy is going to explode." Ellsberg responded, "Well, Henry, I'm here to talk about your Vietnam policy. I'm afraid *it* may explode." For the next ten minutes or so, Ellsberg quickly summarized his view of the White House's threat strategy in Vietnam, which hinged on a series of escalations that included an invasion of Laos and the mining of Haiphong harbor. "I thought to myself," Ellsberg says, "if I'm right, he's got to be hemorrhaging inside." Kissinger said nothing, drumming his fingers on a table and staring intently as Ellsberg talked. When Ellsberg concluded, Kissinger said only, "I do not want to discuss our policy; let us turn to another subject." Ellsberg, who was not easily put off, turned the talk to the Pentagon Papers. He knew that Kissinger was aware of the history project and had been invited to be a consultant in its initial stages. Kissinger acknowledged that there was a copy in the White House safe but said that he had not looked at it. Should he? Ellsberg recalls that he urged Kissinger to read at least the summaries, the few pages condensing each volume. Kissinger said he did not want to do so. "Do we really have anything to learn from this study?" he asked. At this point, Ellsberg says, "My heart sank."

"The major lesson of the study was that each person repeated the same patterns in decision-making and pretty much the same policy as his predecessor without even knowing it. I thought, 'My God! He's in the same state of mind as all the other makers of decision in this long process, each of whom thought that history had started with his administration, and had nothing to learn from earlier ones.'" Ellsberg, who had begun illicitly photocopying the Pentagon Papers late in 1969, would soon turn to a newsman he knew from Vietnam, Neil Sheehan of *The New York Times*.

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Kissinger and Ellsberg met face to face once more before publication of the Pentagon Papers, at a private conference on the war held at MIT on the last weekend in January of 1971. The weekend meeting was sponsored by a moderate group of student leaders, academics, journalists, businessmen, and former government officials, and Kissinger, still the administration's most effective lobbyist with such a group of establishment liberals, as Nixon viewed them, flew from Washington to speak off the record. It was a tour de force at first, with Kissinger being charming and disarming as usual, confiding to the group that Richard Nixon had not been his first choice for the presidency and telling a questioner that he would resign his position if, as Ellsberg recalls, the "whole trend of the policy became morally reprehensible to me." Even then, he added, he would not publicly attack the President if he did resign—"unless gas chambers were set up or some horrendous moral outrage." Finally Ellsberg rose. The NSC staff, he said, was known to have made estimates on the number of Americans who would be killed during the next year of the war. "What is your best estimate of the number of Vietnamese who will be killed in the next twelve months as a consequence of your policy?"

Derek Shearer, a former Yale University student who attended the conference, described in *The Nation* what happened next. When Kissinger responded, "his voice sounded suddenly less certain; he hesitated, then called Ellsberg's question 'cleverly worded.' 'I answer even if I don't answer,' he said. Ellsberg interrupted to say that he had no intention of being clever, that this was a basic question—were such estimates made? Kissinger started to say that one had to consider the options. 'I know the option game, Dr. Kissinger,' said Ellsberg, 'can't you just give us an answer or tell us that you don't have such estimates?' Kissinger again evaded the question; he said the question had racist overtones. Ellsberg pressed him again. For the first time the meeting took on the air of confrontation—then the student moderator stood up and abruptly ended the questioning, saying that Dr. Kissinger was tired and thanked him for coming. The audience, save a few of us, applauded."

On June 13,1971, The New York Times *began to publish the Pentagon Papers, ending Daniel Ellsberg's twenty-month attempt to get those documents on the public record. By the afternoon of June 14, the White House had decided to challenge the nation's most influential newspaper directly, and the next day filed suit in federal court seeking to halt publication of the material. Richard Nixon had chosen to defend the record of his Democratic predecessors in Vietnam. The administration's court suit turned what had been a first-rate newspaper story into a national event. The papers and the man who leaked them, Daniel Ellsberg, were the most prominent news story in the country for a month—until it was announced, on July 15, that Henry Kissinger had silently stolen into Peking for his astonishing meeting with Chou En-Lai, ending a diplomatic impasse between the United States and China that had begun in 1949.*

II. THE PLUMBERS

IN THE EARLY EVENING OF JUNE 17, 1971, HENRY Kissinger held forth in the Oval Office, telling his President, and John Ehrlichman and Bob Haldeman, all about Daniel Ellsberg. Kissinger's comments were recorded, of course, on the hidden White House taping system, and four years later, a portion of that tape was listened to by the Watergate Special Prosecution Force, which was then investigating the internal White House police unit known as the Plumbers.

The special prosecution force had informally agreed with the White House early in the Watergate inquiry that all of the Nixon-Kissinger meetings were prima facie concerned with national-security matters, and none of their extensive conversations was ever subpoenaed. Prosecution files made available to me show, however, that Kissinger, who took part in the fifty-minute meeting on June 17, was inadvertently overheard expressing concern not only about Ellsberg's leak of the Pentagon Papers but also about other documents and secrets he might make public. On that day, or the day before, perhaps, the White House learned that Ellsberg had also provided Senator Charles McC. Mathias, Jr., a liberal Republican, of Maryland, with a copy of one of the administration's first studies on Vietnam. Mathias had brought the top-secret document to the White House Situation Room, where it was verified as authentic.

Nixon was most anxious about the Brookings Institution, a liberal think-tank in Washington to which Mort Halperin had gone after leaving Kissinger's staff. Also at Brookings was Leslie Gelb, who, many in the White House believed, was involved in the Pentagon Papers leak to the *Times*. At one point during the meeting, prosecution files show, Nixon and Kissinger spoke of the possibility that other top-secret documents were stored in Halperin's or Gelb's safe at Brookings, awaiting future release. "They've got the stuff over there," Nixon said. "Stuff that we can't even get out of there from the Pentagon." Kissinger responded: "Can't we send someone over there to get it back?"

No attempt was actually made by the White House to get access, legally or by other means, to the documents believed stored by Halperin and Gelb, although many plans—including a proposed fire-bombing—were dis-

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

cussed over the next few weeks. Kissinger was not a target of the Special Prosecution Force, and his taped comment had no immediate relevance. Knowledge of the June 17 tape was kept tightly sealed inside the Special Prosecution Force's files. "There was incredible ambivalence about the whole thing," one Watergate attorney recalls. "Do you want to go up against him? Kissinger was being promoted by everybody as the one guy in the administration who's solid—and he's threatening to resign. I got a sense that if we found something that finished Henry, the country was going to be in bad shape."

Kissinger escaped any serious investigation during Watergate, as those attorneys who had some doubts soon found themselves immersed in various other matters. One prosecution official, discussing that White House tape recording years later, recalled a quality of Kissinger's conduct in front of Nixon, Ehrlichman, and Haldeman that made him wish he could have listened to more of Kissinger's Oval Office meetings. "He was like one of the boys, talking tough. One says, 'Let's bring knives.' Another says, 'Let's bring bats.' And Henry pipes up, 'Let's bring zip-guns.'" The prosecutor recalled his surprise at hearing Kissinger: "I thought he might have been classier."

Kissinger dominated the meeting on June 17 with his description of Ellsberg and the threat to national security he posed. Ehrlichman's notes of the meeting, as later published during the House impeachment inquiry, showed that Kissinger depicted Ellsberg as a half-crazed genius whose views on the war had turned dovish with excessive drug use and aberrant sexuality. It was a shrewd performance, which played perfectly to the prejudices and preconceptions of Nixon and his two top aides. It was also an exercise in character assassination, similar in intent, if not in degree, to Kissinger's performance in maligning Morton Halperin in front of the President. Ehrlichman's notes showed that Kissinger described Ellsberg as a "genius" who was the "brightest student" Kissinger had ever had at Harvard. (In fact, Kissinger had never taught Ellsberg.) Ellsberg was further described by Kissinger as one who "shot at peasants" while serving in Vietnam and who seemed "always a little unbalanced." (Ellsberg has emphatically denied ever shooting at civilians while in Vietnam.) Kissinger then recounted Ellsberg's alleged use of drugs, information that he could have learned only from the White House wiretaps. Kissinger said that he hadn't seen Ellsberg in one and a half years, except for the meeting at MIT at which Ellsberg "heckled" Kissinger—another lie, for the two had met the previous September at San Clemente, where Ellsberg had urged Kissinger to read the Pentagon Papers. Ehrlichman's notes at that point included the phrase "Murder in Laos," a reference, obviously made by Kissinger, to an early 1971 essay by Ellsberg in the *New York Review of Books* in which Ellsberg restated the theme, initially expressed at MIT, that the White House had made no estimate and took no account of civilian casualties in analyzing its Vietnam programs.

Kissinger's performance on June 17 was all the more remarkable because he had, in essence, run through the same allegations the day before in front of the President, but not in front of Haldeman and Ehrlichman. On June 16, Charles Colson had taken two young Vietnam veterans, John O'Neill and Melville L. Stephens, both of whom were supporters of the White House's war policies, to visit the President in the late afternoon. After a few moments of conversation, Colson recalls, the President summoned Kissinger to his office. Responding with enthusiasm to the President's obvious cue, Kissinger proceeded to give a twenty-minute diatribe on Ellsberg, which Colson recalls as "one of his most passionate tirades. He described Ellsberg as a sexual pervert, said he shot Vietnamese from helicopters in Vietnam, used drugs, had sexual relations with his wife in front of their children. Henry said he was the most dangerous man in America today. He said he 'must be stopped at all costs.'" Melville Stephens, who later joined the White House staff, confirms Colson's account and recalls leaving the Oval Office convinced that Ellsberg "obviously had access to lots of other sensitive documents."

Nixon's and Kissinger's concern about Ellsberg was real, but there was obviously also an element of performance in the White House hysteria that Kissinger created and Nixon encouraged in the first few days after publication of the Pentagon Papers. These must have been extremely difficult days for Kissinger. (He was, for one thing, on the eve of his secret trip to China.) He had to distance himself from Ellsberg quickly and decisively to ensure the President's continued trust. After all, he had brought Ellsberg onto the Security Council staff as a consultant and encouraged him to work on the review of Vietnam policy in early 1969 that had ended up in Senator Mathias's office. Furthermore, Kissinger himself was mentioned in the Pentagon Papers in connection with his role in the Johnson Administration in seeking diplomatic contact with the North Vietnamese. Kissinger also knew far more about the project than anyone in the White House: despite his later disavowals, he had read some of its most sensitive volumes, dealing with negotiations to end the war. Thus, the publication of the papers directly threatened Kissinger by serving as yet another example of his poor judgment—in the view of the President and his advisers—in the staffing of his office. Ellsberg was a personal-security threat.

Richard Nixon understood almost immediately that the Pentagon Papers posed no threat to national security but provided a vital opportunity to score political points against the anti-war movement and the liberal Democrats. Now he could cite national security as the basis for striking at a small group of Muskie advisers, including Mort Halperin, Tony Lake, and Leslie Gelb, who had been overheard repeatedly denigrating the White House on the wiretaps.

By mid-June of 1971, the White House had already been threatened with exposure of its wiretapping by J. Edgar

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Hoover, who understood only too well—and let the President and his advisers know he understood—that national security had little to do with the twenty-one months of wiretapping. If there was to be a break-in at Brookings, or other clandestine activities against the Democrats, the national-security justification would have to be airtight. Kissinger, with his harangues against Ellsberg and his warnings of national calamity, was providing Nixon with the rationale and the protection he needed to initiate what Hoover had stopped in 1970—the Huston plan, with its call for the FBI, with the aid of other intelligence agencies, to make aggressive use of wiretapping, illegal break-ins, and other techniques to monitor and combat the more extreme elements of the anti-war and black-liberation movements.

IN LATE JUNE OF 1971, KISSINGER WAS FAR BUSIER than anyone else in the White House. Planning for the secret trip to China was imposing enough, but he had other travel plans as well. He was scheduled to meet with Le Duc Tho in Paris on June 26, to receive Hanoi's response to a revised American peace offer that had been made secretly in May. Kissinger arranged for a public two-day visit to London beginning on June 24, in part to disguise his mission across the English Channel. There were other pressing issues: the fall presidential elections in South Vietnam; the nearly concluded four-power talks on Berlin (which Kissinger and Nixon were trying to manipulate in the back channel, to prevent the State Department from claiming a success); and the continuing efforts by the State Department to work out a Middle East settlement.

Despite Kissinger's growing ascendancy inside the White House, Secretary of State Rogers was still a constant source of insecurity for him and one reason he saw the China trip as all-important. A successful visit to Peking would deliver a telling blow to Rogers's prestige and effectiveness, Kissinger realized. There was nothing in the Pentagon Papers that would jeopardize the China rapprochement; the far greater threat came from Ellsberg and the President's obsession with the idea that the NSC staff was not trustworthy. Over the next few months, as Nixon continued to focus on the Pentagon Papers and other leaks, Kissinger would not dare to do other than fully support his President. His heavy travel schedule posed an obvious problem, and it was Al Haig who inevitably was assigned the major liaison role for the National Security Council as the White House organized the Plumbers unit in early July.

During the 1973 Senate Foreign Relations Committee inquiry into wiretapping, Kissinger was asked—almost casually—about the White House attempts in mid-1971 to make political use out of the Pentagon Papers. Kissinger's response seemed plausible: "There were a number of individuals in the White House who occasionally made requests of various kinds, which, as a matter of principle, I refused. . . . I frankly thought there were a few Boy Scouts who were trying to win some points, and I always rejected them."

In the first volume of his memoirs, Kissinger went even further in his protestations and suggested that the political opportunism that the Pentagon Papers provoked in the Oval Office had little to do with him: "The sudden release of over 7,000 pages of secret documents came as a profound shock to the Administration. The documents, of course, were in no way damaging to the Nixon presidency. Indeed, there was some sentiment among White House political operatives to exploit them as an illustration of the machinations of our predecessors and the difficulties we inherited. But such an attitude seemed to me against the public interest: Our foreign policy could never achieve the continuity on which other nations must depend, and our system of government would surely lose all trust if each President used his control of the process of declassification to smear his predecessors."

Kissinger found it easy to take the high road in his memoirs, but the reality of the White House in 1971 did not permit such indulgence. To stand aside quietly and allow a group of political operatives to become involved in an investigation of national-security leaks involving his office, and his judgment, was unthinkable. The delicate task of defending both the National Security Council staff and Henry Kissinger inside the Oval Office fell to Al Haig, who played a pivotal role in the summer and fall of 1971 as the White House began its illegal activities against Daniel Ellsberg and others conveniently believed by John Mitchell and some of his aides in the Justice Department—as well as by the President—to be involved in a political conspiracy against the White House and the Vietnam War. Haig had been faithful to Kissinger during the nearly two years of wiretapping. It was Haig who directly exposed himself by regularly consulting with FBI officials and who was responsible, in large measure, for drafting and signing the documents that relayed Kissinger's wiretap instructions to the FBI. Haig was bureaucratically sophisticated, as an ambitious Army officer had to be, and he would know how to protect Kissinger when things got rough behind his back—as Kissinger knew they would. Kissinger's decision in late 1968 to bring Daniel Ellsberg into the White House as a consultant had turned out to be a mistake for which he would pay in the Oval Office; the issue was how to limit the damage.

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Nixon began his attacks on the National Security Council staff within days of Kissinger's departure for Peking. On July 2, Ehrlichman was assigned full responsibility for investigating the Ellsberg case by the President, and ordered to appoint a staff aide to devote himself full-time to the "conspiracy" involving Ellsberg and his fellow Democrats. A continuing Nixon concern was Hoover and the FBI, which, the White House believed, was less than enthusiastic about the investigation of Ellsberg and his fellow conspirators. On July 6, Ehrlichman's notes quoted Nixon explicitly expressing his feeling about Kissinger's staff: "Can't assume NSC staff not participants" in the assumed conspiracy. The President suggested that Larry Lynn, the former Kissinger aide who was then an assistant secretary at HEW, be given a lie-detector test to determine his involvement. He told Ehrlichman to "put a nonlegal team on the conspiracy"—and thus the Plumbers unit was born.

There was also talk that day of a "Communist" link to Ellsberg—a connection that no government agency was ever able to demonstrate. Three days later, while Kissinger was in China, the President told Ehrlichman and Haldeman that Kissinger's "staff must be cleaned out." By that day, too, Ehrlichman had found the right man to direct the "non-legal" team sought by the President—David Young, one of Kissinger's former personal aides. Nixon approved the choice and asked Ehrlichman to bring Young in for a face-to-face meeting. One of Young's functions would be to investigate Kissinger's NSC staff. Kissinger, in China, was not to be bothered by the new "special duty" for Young, but Al Haig would be informed, Ehrlichman's notes showed.

By mid-1971, Young was one of the few remaining members of the National Security Council staff who had worked closely with Kissinger and befriended him prior to Nixon's election. Young, then thirty-four years old, had met Kissinger while working on Nelson Rockefeller's 1968 presidential campaign. His credentials seemed impeccable: he was associated with a prominent Wall Street law firm and had attended Oxford before graduating from Cornell University law school in the early 1960s. After Nixon's election, Young approached Kissinger to volunteer his services, and he was put on the NSC staff in early 1970 to help handle Kissinger's scheduling and other personal matters. By all accounts, the balding, seemingly self-assured lawyer was dutiful in his loyalty to Kissinger. Young's wife took care of Kissinger's laundry, and he, according to former NSC aides, was responsible for buying some of Kissinger's clothing. One aide recalls inadvertently finding a note from Young to Kissinger asking, in essence: "Did you like the tie? I thought it would go well with your blue suit." The Kissinger–Young relationship soured, nonetheless, as did most of Kissinger's relationships with his personal aides, and David R. Halperin, a former Navy officer, was added to Kissinger's personal staff. Young had been unable to outmanipulate Haig, and by late 1970 began to tell his friends inside the White House about his desire to assume a more substantive role in the government.

In the second volume of his memoirs, *Years of Upheaval*, Kissinger acknowledged that Young had run "afoul" of Haig, and claimed that he had been shifted in January of 1971 "from my immediate office to a make-work job of research in the White House Situation Room." There is evidence, however, that Young—his "make-work job" to the contrary notwithstanding—continued to be directly involved in some of the most sensitive and closely held issues in the White House. On January 25, 1971, for example, Kissinger brought Young and no other aide to a meeting with the chairman, general counsel, and chief security officer of the Atomic Energy Commission to discuss the security clearance of the operator of a nuclear-fuel-processing plant in Pennsylvania, who was suspected of helping to divert 200 pounds of highly enriched uranium to the Israelis. Adding to the sensitivity of the meeting was the fact that agents from Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service, were believed by some CIA officials to have been involved in the diversion of the uranium—enough material to make five to ten nuclear bombs. Within months, however, Young's meaningful role inside Kissinger's staff had eroded to the point where he approached John Ehrlichman and appealed for a job on the Domestic Council. "Young came to me," Ehrlichman recalls, "and literally broke down and cried. He felt he'd been badly treated by Kissinger and didn't know what to do." Young complained that Kissinger no longer "was seeing him," Ehrlichman says, "and Haig was bedeviling him." It was against this background that Ehrlichman had proposed Young for the Plumbers job in early July of 1971, before Kissinger returned from China, in the belief that Kissinger would not object. Young later told a friend on the NSC staff that Kissinger's heated objection created a "major battle" that was settled, after Nixon's intervention, with a compromise. Young's friend, one of few in whom Young confided, further recalls: "David told me that the deal that was worked out was that David would be on loan to other people but Kissinger could call on him whenever he wanted. He did see Henry from time to time; he said Henry still had some kind of claim on him."

By July 6, there was an added element in the White House anxiety: Nixon's insistence once again that the Brookings Institution be penetrated and that Gelb's and Halperin's files be removed and returned to the White House. The catalyst in Nixon's renewed concern was Charles Colson, the President's political aide, who had obtained a 1969 Brookings brochure announcing a two-year history project on the Vietnam War by Leslie Gelb, which was to culminate with the publication of a "balanced and accurate history . . ." Ellsberg, according to the brochure, was on an advisory panel for the study, along with John J. McCloy, the international lawyer, and Stanley Hoffmann, the Harvard political scientist. The timing indicated, Colson told Ehrlichman in a subsequent memorandum, that "another

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

installment of the Pentagon Papers" would be made public in a few months. When Nixon learned of the new study, Colson recalls, he "blew up at Haldeman" and said, "Goddammit, Bob, haven't we got that capability in place? How many times am I going to have to tell you? Get 'em [the White House documents believed to be in Brookings] back." After the meeting, Haldeman took Colson aside and said, Colson recalls, "Well, you heard the President. Take care of it."

Over the next two months, there was repeated and serious talk inside the White House of a possible fire-bombing of Brookings in an effort to steal the classified papers believed to be stored there. The project eventually came to the attention of G. Gordon Liddy, the former FBI agent, and E. Howard Hunt, the former CIA operative, who had been hired, with Ehrlichman's eventual approval, to work in the Plumbers unit. In his memoirs, Liddy wrote that he and Hunt developed a plan in September to buy a used fire engine and firemen's uniforms for a squad of Cubans who would be trained in fire-fighting techniques "so their performance would be believable." Brookings would "be fire-bombed" with delayed-timing devices; the Cubans would respond, "hit the vault [where Nixon believed the documents were held], and get themselves out in the confusion. . . ." The plan was rejected as being too expensive, Liddy wrote. (All of this scheming took place after Liddy, Hunt, and the Cubans had broken into the Beverly Hills office of Dr. Lewis J. Fielding, Ellsberg's psychoanalyst, in a futile effort to find Ellsberg's psychiatric records or other possibly detrimental information.)

KISSINGER WAS BEING PROTECTED FROM DIRECT participation in all of this by Al Haig, who emerged over the summer as more indispensable than ever. There is no evidence that Haig had knowledge of the proposed fire-bombing of Brookings in mid-1971, but according to Haldeman's memoirs, he had joined in similar planning with Haldeman in 1969 at Nixon's request. More significant, there *is* evidence that Haig was involved in an effort during the summer of 1971, also triggered by the President, to conceal the fact that Ellsberg had been overheard on the White House wiretaps.

Haig's first known involvement in the White House's campaign against Daniel Ellsberg—according to unpublished records of the Watergate Special Prosecution Force made available to me—was on July 12, 1971, at San Clemente, where Nixon and his top aides gathered to discuss the question of Ellsberg's repeated appearances on the White House wiretaps. Ellsberg had been indicted on June 28 by the Justice Department and charged with violations of the theft, espionage, and conspiracy statutes for his act in photocopying the Pentagon Papers. Within a few days, the Internal Security Division of the Justice Department, following routine practice, formally requested that the FBI check its wiretap logs to determine whether Ellsberg had been overheard. On July 9, the Internal Security Division filed a second request, asking the FBI also to check its records on potential grand-jury witnesses in the case, including Morton Halperin, Leslie Gelb, and Neil Sheehan, the *New York Times* reporter to whom Ellsberg had provided access to the papers.

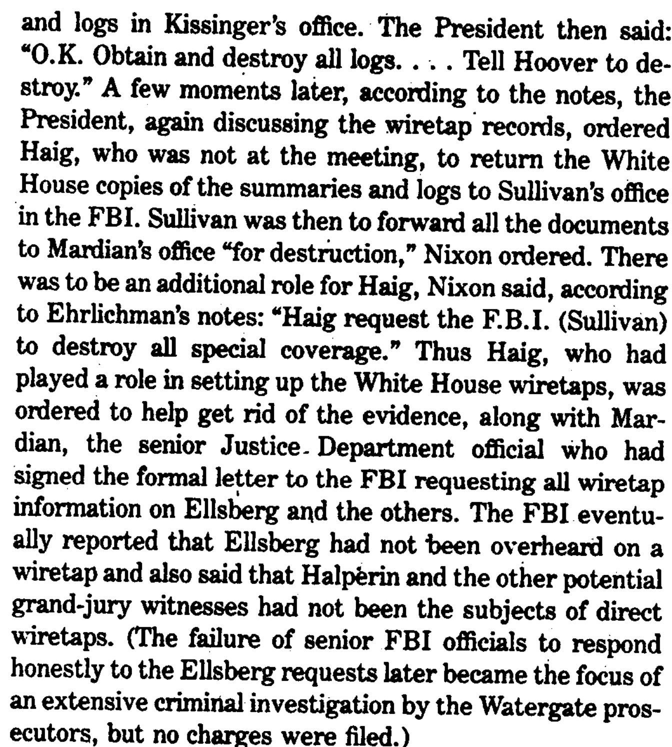
The duplicity in all of this was immense, because the head of the Internal Security Division at the time was Robert Mardian, and he, as Watergate prosecutors later learned, knew of the White House wiretapping. On July 6, Nixon, Mitchell, Ehrlichman, and Haldeman met in the Oval Office and discussed—almost casually—the importance of reviewing the wiretap records to see whether some detrimental information about Ellsberg and his suspected collaborators would be revealed. "In light of this," Haldeman said at one point, according to an unpublished Watergate Special Prosecution Force transcript of that meeting, "some of that stuff may be a hell of a lot more meaningful now . . ." Mitchell responded: "I've had them reviewed in the Bureau [FBI]." Haldeman said that there were "a lot of conversations with Sheehan in them, to my recollection." Mitchell, after some discussion, acknowledged, "Bob is right. You never know what those taps mean . . ."

The revived interest in the White House wiretaps also prompted William Sullivan, who was then in the midst of a bitter dispute with J. Edgar Hoover, to visit Mardian and warn him, as Mardian later testified, that Hoover could not be trusted and might seek to blackmail Nixon, as he had blackmailed other Presidents, because of the wiretap material. Sullivan, who suspected that he would soon be fired by Hoover, also told Mardian that he had physical possession of the FBI's set of wiretap logs and summaries. On July 11, Mardian flew to the California White House for a meeting with Nixon and his closest aides the next morning. By then, the FBI still had not responded to the Justice Department requests for wiretapping information on Ellsberg and the potential grand-jury witnesses.

John Ehrlichman's notes of the July 12 meeting, from the still-unpublished prosecution files that were made available to me, suggest that Mardian raised the issue of the Hoover threat with the President; the President and his aides also discussed the problem posed by formally admitting that Ellsberg had been overheard. To do so would obviously reveal the Kissinger wiretaps. Nixon, according to Ehrlichman's notes, ordered Haldeman to "recover documents from Haig"—that is, the set of wiretap summaries

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4



and logs in Kissinger's office. The President then said: "O.K. Obtain and destroy all logs. . . . Tell Hoover to destroy." A few moments later, according to the notes, the President, again discussing the wiretap records, ordered Haig, who was not at the meeting, to return the White House copies of the summaries and logs to Sullivan's office in the FBI. Sullivan was then to forward all the documents to Mardian's office "for destruction," Nixon ordered. There was to be an additional role for Haig, Nixon said, according to Ehrlichman's notes: "Haig request the F.B.I. (Sullivan) to destroy all special coverage." Thus Haig, who had played a role in setting up the White House wiretaps, was ordered to help get rid of the evidence, along with Mardian, the senior Justice Department official who had signed the formal letter to the FBI requesting all wiretap information on Ellsberg and the others. The FBI eventually reported that Ellsberg had not been overheard on a wiretap and also said that Halperin and the other potential grand-jury witnesses had not been the subjects of direct wiretaps. (The failure of senior FBI officials to respond honestly to the Ellsberg requests later became the focus of an extensive criminal investigation by the Watergate prosecutors, but no charges were filed.)

Haig, even more than Kissinger, was a presidential insider that summer, one who could be trusted to play "hardball"—even on an issue as sensitive and potentially damaging as the destruction of Ellsberg wiretap evidence at the height of the government's prosecution of the heavily publicized Pentagon Papers case. Kissinger returned from Peking and Paris early on the morning of July 13, the day after the fateful decision on the wiretaps. Did Haig tell Kissinger what was going on? Former National Security Council staff aides, in scores of interviews, have said it is inconceivable that he did not. Kissinger's denials—often made—of any knowledge of the White House's activities involving Daniel Ellsberg or the Plumbers unit were taken at face value by many in the public and the media throughout the Watergate inquiry in the mid-1970s, largely because so little was known about the full extent of Haig's complicity. Haig did more than merely know what was going on in the White House: he was part of it.

Later on July 13, two days before Nixon's announcement of the secret visit to Peking, Kissinger was formally told by Ehrlichman that David Young was leaving his staff to work on the Ellsberg investigation. In an interview with me, Ehrlichman recalled an extended conversation with Kissinger aboard the presidential helicopter at San Clemente in which the functions of the Plumbers operation were specifically discussed: David Young would be investigating leaks. Kissinger resisted bitterly, Ehrlichman recalled: "Henry had no objection to the activity, but he didn't want to give up Young." The President decided that Young would join forces with Egil (Bud) Krogh, Jr., one of Ehrlichman's aides on the White House Domestic Council, to set up the "non-legal" internal-investigations unit. Kissinger's concern about Young's departure was inevitable

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

and, in part, almost reflexive: aides such as Young, who were permitted access to many of the back-channel secrets and some of Kissinger's private telephone conversations, knew far too much. Young knew, for example, about the White House wiretaps, and was provided with, or took, copies of some of the wiretap summaries and perhaps some of the original FBI logs of the Halperin–Ellsberg conversations when he went to the new Plumbers office in the basement of the Old Executive Office Building.

David Young would escape prosecution in the Ellsberg case by cooperating with the Watergate Special Prosecution Force's investigation of Ehrlichman, who was convicted in 1974 of violating Ellsberg's civil rights and lying to a grand jury; no investigator from the prosecution force or the House Judiciary Committee ever formally questioned him on the link, as co-director of the Plumbers, to Henry Kissinger.

In his public statements, Kissinger has insisted that he did not know in 1971 that Young had left his staff to set up Nixon's special investigation unit. In a private briefing for a group of *Time* magazine executives in early 1974, Kissinger declared: "Let me put David Young's relationship to me in perspective. He was not a big man in my life, and I was in his life." As far as he was concerned, Kissinger said, Young had been reassigned only to handle declassification matters for the President. That, of course, was the cover story used by Young to explain his new job to his friends and associates. Kissinger, despite his denials, not only knew the truth about Young's important new role but must have suspected that Young's most urgent assignment would be to investigate the NSC staff and even Kissinger's personal involvement with White House leaks.

The President and all of his senior advisers—with the exception of Kissinger—were enthusiastic about the Plumbers and the concept of the White House taking charge of "national-security" investigations. Richard V. Allen, Kissinger's former aide who had returned to the White House in 1971 to help handle foreign-trade issues, recalls hearing Haldeman describe Howard Hunt that summer as a "balls-out" CIA operative. Nixon was then moving to the right politically as part of his drive to capture the hard-hat Middle America vote, and punishing Daniel Ellsberg for releasing the Pentagon Papers fit right in. The President also began relying more on John Connally, the conservative Texan who had been named treasury secretary in late 1970, and who was emerging—to Kissinger's dismay—as a rival for the President's ear. Men such as Gordon Liddy and Howard Hunt were viewed as exciting additions to the Plumbers unit; they were tough and experienced agents ready to operate clandestinely on behalf of the President and his re-election. Egil Krogh, Ehrlichman's aide who was assigned to direct the Plumbers along with David Young, could also be tough when it came to the President and national security.

Charles Cooke, Elliot Richardson's longtime aide, initiated a series of casual lunches at the White House and elsewhere with Krogh shortly after moving with Richardson to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in 1970. Although he and Krogh had many domestic issues to discuss, Cooke recalls, they invariably talked about Vietnam. Late in the year, after Nixon ordered the resumption of bombing in the north, Cooke started to summarize all of the arguments against it, beginning with the fact—obvious to him—that the war was in the south and could only be won on the ground there. "Krogh just blew up," Cooke recalls: "'My God, don't you people understand—the man [Richard Nixon] is going to blow them off the face of the earth unless they cave in.' That was our last lunch," Cooke says.

Krogh knew little about foreign policy in 1971. He had been brought by Ehrlichman on to the White House Domestic Council in early 1969, after having worked part-time for Ehrlichman's Seattle law firm in the late 1960s, while he was a student at the University of Washington law school. Krogh's primary responsibilities on the Domestic Council revolved around narcotics control, crime prevention, and transportation policy; he also ran the White House command post during the many anti-war rallies that convulsed Washington in the early years of the Nixon Administration. Krogh and Young knew each other casually in mid-1971, but they were not close friends; both were members of a group of White House aides who met occasionally in a Georgetown bar for drinks and free-wheeling gossip (although Krogh, a Christian Scientist, does not drink).

Shortly after their assignment as co-directors of the Plumbers, Krogh recalls, Young began doing exactly what Kissinger feared: gossiping about the Kissinger–Nixon relationship. In one of their first extended conversations, Krogh says, Young "told me of the time he was on the phone [listening in] when Nixon and Kissinger were talking. Nixon was drunk and he said, 'Henry, we've got to nuke them.'" The anecdote was chilling, Krogh says, and added a sense of urgency to his mission: the Vietnam War had to be won and Dan Ellsberg had to be stopped. "We were going after an espionage ring, not just Daniel Ellsberg," Krogh explained to John Ehrlichman in 1973 during the Watergate crisis. "We had guys like [Paul] Warnke, Gelb, and Halperin . . . Halperin had even been tapped when he was on the NSC staff because they didn't trust him. They thought he was a traitor. We didn't know if there were spies all over this country at that point . . ."

Krogh, with his inexperience in foreign policy, may well have believed that such a conspiracy existed. David Young's beliefs are much more difficult to assess. Young knew that a success in the Plumbers job would put him in line for a senior appointment in the Nixon Administration. Did Young really suspect that Ellsberg was part of a conspiracy involving Mort Halperin and other Democrats? Young had access to the Halperin wiretaps, and knew that Ellsberg was as hostile privately about Nixon and Kissinger as he became in his public statements and writings

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

by 1971. But the wiretaps were devoid of any disclosures of national-security information; Ellsberg may have been able correctly to predict the administration's future course of action in the Vietnam War, but he was not violating any laws in so doing. Most of the significant leaks of national-security information, as Young knew, originated in Henry Kissinger's office. Young was also aware that Ellsberg had met with Kissinger the previous September to urge an end to the war; he may have known that Kissinger requested that Ellsberg meet again with him. All of this meant, as Young clearly had to understand, that the issue of Ellsberg was far more complicated than Krogh, Ehrlichman, and the President believed. Yet Young joined with alacrity in the White House machinations against Ellsberg in the summer and fall of 1971.

Further evidence of Haig's—and hence Kissinger's—direct involvement with the Plumbers was provided in a series of FBI documents released to the *Times*'s William Beecher in a Freedom of Information suit. The documents show that Young and Krogh worked directly with Haig to investigate yet another Beecher revelation—a July 23, 1971, dispatch outlining the administration's revised SALT negotiating position. The *Times* story, which publicly revealed that the administration had decided to seek controls over submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), enraged the President and the disarmament community. Nixon summoned Egil Krogh and Ehrlichman to an Oval Office meeting on the next day, a Saturday, and ordered widespread polygraph tests and a revision of the classification system. A few hours later, Krogh called a meeting of his own to discuss the Beecher story; those in attendance included two senior FBI officials, Robert Mardian, Al Haig, Howard Hunt, and David Young, among others. According to an FBI summary of the meeting, Krogh described the President as being "up on the ceiling" about the leak and wanting the sources located within thirty-six hours. General Haig then reported, the FBI memorandum said, "the results of his coordinating and he found that over 200 persons in various agencies, excluding clerical personnel, had access to the [National Security] Decision Memorandum relating to the U.S. proposals." Haig was thus more than merely participating in the SALT leak inquiry; he—along with Krogh, Young, and the other Plumbers—was one of its administrators.

Kissinger himself got directly into the internal-security business once again, shortly after his return in late July from another secret meeting in Paris with Le Duc Tho. His target was William Beecher. On July 29, Beecher had done it again—reporting that the Nixon Administration had ended its long-standing spy flights over China in an obvious effort to avoid any serious incident before Richard Nixon's summit meeting in early 1972. In a memorandum for the record, W. Donald Stewart, the Pentagon official in charge of investigations, reported that Kissinger had personally telephoned William Sullivan of the FBI to relay "his great concern" about Beecher's new story and to urge a full investigation. Such a request would be perfectly appropriate for the President's national security adviser, but Kissinger, it should be stated again, repeatedly testified during the various Watergate inquiries that he chose to stop dealing in internal-security matters as of May, 1970, when the White House ordered all wiretap summaries to be sent only to Bob Haldeman's office.

On August 5, just a few days after Kissinger's complaint to William Sullivan about the Beecher story, one of the final steps in the wiretap saga took place in Kissinger's office. Robert Mardian, to whom Nixon had assigned the task—along with Haig—of getting rid of the White House wiretap records, visited the NSC offices that day to inspect Kissinger's wiretap records. Mardian had earlier discovered that some copies of the FBI summaries had disappeared in the Justice Department; the suspected culprit was none other than J. Edgar Hoover, who had made clear to the President that he would stop at nothing to protect his job. Exactly what happened to all of the wiretap documents is not known.

The prosecutors did learn, according to unpublished files, that sometime in mid-July, just after the crucial July 12 meeting at San Clemente involving the President, the White House files of Kissinger, Haldeman, and Nixon were stripped of all wiretap summary letters and logs. Those documents were returned to the FBI, where they eventually came under Mardian's personal control, as Nixon had ordered. Mardian and his aides subsequently determined that a few of the FBI summary letters were missing, and it was that fact that prompted Mardian's visit to Kissinger and Haig. His goal, apparently, was fully to account for Kissinger's copies of the FBI documents, and to ensure that Kissinger's records were consistent with the FBI's tally. It wouldn't do to have such papers floating about the bureaucracy.

Mardian, as the FBI account of the interview reported, "specifically remembered the incident because when he came into the office, Dr. Kissinger addressed a remark which Mr. Mardian felt was in extremely poor taste under the circumstances. . . . Kissinger said something to the effect, 'Do you have what I said on the phone?' implying, according to Mr. Mardian, that Mardian had results of a wiretap on Dr. Kissinger. . . . Dr. Kissinger also said that he had been keeping logs for the time when he writes his

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4

memoirs, but laughed and said he doesn't keep them any more."

Kissinger and Haig then got down to the business at hand, and carefully went through Kissinger's copy of the wiretap records. It was not clear from Mardian's interview with the FBI whether Kissinger kept a set of the wiretap summaries and logs in his office or merely had a summary of what had been in his possession and previously returned. Mardian later personally delivered all of the collected wiretap records to Nixon, who instructed Ehrlichman to bury them in his files, where they were discovered a few days after Ehrlichman's resignation from the White House in 1973. In his August 5 meeting with Kissinger and Haig, Mardian acknowledged that the careful checking was necessary to ensure that Hoover did not have access to any of the documents, and thus was not in a position to blackmail the White House. Kissinger, in his interview with the Special Prosecution Force in late 1975, also acknowledged that he was aware of Hoover's blackmail threat, although he denied being present when Mardian and Haig went through his office wiretap records. In a report on the interview, the Special Prosecution Force further quoted Kissinger as conceding that he was aware that "the nature of this [Hoover's] blackmail threat related to the embarrassment that would be caused if it were known that newsmen had been tapped."

"Embarrassment" was hardly the word. Kissinger had to realize that such a revelation would have been devastating, not only to him personally but perhaps even to Nixon's re-election campaign. It would also have heightened the resolve of the U.S. anti-war forces. Kissinger suffered through the meeting and the distasteful comparing of wiretap documents with Mardian for the same reason that everyone else in the White House did—fear of exposure.

William Sullivan of the FBI understood how far Kissinger would go to avoid embarrassment. Sometime in the spring of 1973, amid the Watergate revelations, he sent Kissinger a memorandum summarizing his understanding of the White House wiretapping, which had yet to become publicly known. The document enraged Kissinger, according to a close aide, but he knew what to do without being told. Sullivan soon became Kissinger's and Haig's choice to be named director of the FBI. It was Haig, Nixon's new chief of staff, who telephoned Elliot Richardson, the newly nominated attorney general, and strongly recommended Sullivan for the job in the first week of May. Richardson's senior aides, J. T. Smith and Jonathan Moore, moved quickly and successfully to prevent Sullivan's nomination. Moore says that he had no special knowledge in arguing against Sullivan. "He was the wrong guy with the wrong history," he says. Within two weeks, Sullivan made available to *The New York Times* copies of White House wiretap authorizations, which directly linked Kissinger to the requests for wiretaps on his own staff aides.

Kissinger's concern that spring was not only wiretapping. He also had to worry about David Young, who had continued to operate—as only a few knew—in Kissinger's sphere despite his assignment to the Plumbers.

In the fall of 1980, I obtained access to a private journal that was informally maintained by a key Kissinger aide, who served in a position of confidentiality throughout the Watergate era; it summarized many conversations between Kissinger and the President, as well as between Kissinger and Haig. The journal, made available under the condition that the name of its author not be revealed, showed that Haig was directly receiving progress reports on the Plumbers' activities from David Young. Kissinger was "worried," the journal noted in an entry dated March 15, 1973, "concerning the Plumbers' work." At that date, of course, there had yet to be any public revelation of the existence of the Plumbers unit or of its wrongdoing. As the Watergate scandal unraveled later that spring, the journal further revealed that David Young had emerged as a constant cause of concern for Kissinger. In early June, the journal noted that Kissinger was openly worried about Young and whether he was truly loyal or was just saying that he "was a Kissinger man." At one point that spring, according to the journal, Kissinger even considered reinstating Young as an aide on the NSC staff, to help ensure that he would not tell all he knew.

By October of 1975, when Kissinger finally agreed to be interviewed by the Watergate prosecutors, it was safe to do so. Gerald R. Ford was President, and Watergate seemed far removed. In retrospect, Kissinger had made a wise choice in deciding to deny any knowledge whatsoever of the Plumbers operation. Al Haig and David Young kept their silence. If Kissinger had taken another tack and admitted to having some idea of what David Young and Egil Krogh were doing, he would have exposed himself to further inquiries and, inevitably, more admission of knowledge. That Kissinger had lied about his role in the wiretapping and his knowledge of the Plumbers was widely assumed in the Washington press corps, and even inside the Watergate Special Prosecution Force, but Kissinger was permitted to slide by with his half-truths and misstatements. Only Richard Nixon, Alexander Haig, some of the men around them, and a few Watergate prosecutors fortunate enough to have learned what was on the White House tapes understood the truth: Kissinger was involved. □

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/02/08 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000402830031-4