

Marder interview with Henry Kissinger re wiretapping  
May 14, 1973

Marder reads Caliborne lead.

K: The first thing to remember is that Ruckelshaus doesn't say I asked him to wiretap. I expressed my great concern to the FBI director about the security of classified information.

I found an FBI man (on duty to the NSC adviser to... there is no doubt it is true I expressed my concern to the FBI about making sure we had adequate security ... and to be sure there would be no unauthorized ... (leaks?) of information

... were conducted by appropriate authorities, some organized by the FBI on the basis of security files they had, some from lists of those who had documents that were being investigated.

Marder: lede on story says K initiated wiretaps/

K: That's incorrect. You cannot report that from what Ruckelshaus said and it's also incorrect.

...  
the 17 (taps) were cumulative.

Marder: two were for as little as 30 days and one as long as 21 months.

K: It's totally incorrect to say I initiated that ... don't think ...

Marder: Did you ask for any wiretaps?

K: If I remember that conversation (and then he said something like it was not the most important thing in his life) it concerned safeguarding ~~say~~ classified info I did not ask for wiretaps or any particular method of investigating.

Marder: Did he suggest it - meaning did Hoover suggest taps?

K: I do not remember that conversation concerning any individuals ... files were not kept in this office... some wiretap reports were coming to me ... individuals in my jurisdiction or individuals with documents in my jurisdiction, in the early part of the administration.

Marder: Did you have any compunction about the use of wiretapping?

K: This is an extremely complex affair and if it were not mixed up in Watergate it could be seen in a much clearer context particularly who was the target of it. You don't have to assume I was out to get anyone. No one in my jurisdiction was dismissed because of this... I don't want to get into the human aspect ... with every individual engaged in the public ...

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Marder: Your statement saturday created the contrary impression that you were unassociated with any initiation

K: Nothing Ruckelshaus said is contradictory to that.

Marder: The time factor...it would seem to have more relation to vietnam than salt:

K: yes and other problems, the Middle East, Korea

Marder: involving NSC, State:

K: That would be my impression but since I didn't see all I cannot judge that... I did not .... the taps and after some period I did not receive the reports.

Marder: Was the information helpful, did it facilitate any ...

K: I discharged no one nor transferred anyone as a result.

Marder: Did it result in buttoning up any leaks ... what we're going to need is some kind of description from you

K: Why should it come from me I...

Marder: Ruckelshaus said you initiated it

K: I did not ... it was after a conversation with me... my object was to save classified information... that was my duty... I do not think Ruckelshaus said I asked him to do any particular form of investigation... my conversation with J. Edgar Hoover concerned safeguarding of information and not the initiation of any particular form of investigation.

Marder: You did not request wiretapping?

K: I think the first statement makes it clear..

Marder: What are your views, if any, on the use of wiretapping on officials or newsmen? Do you have any second thoughts about the process?

K: I have said what I will say... I will stand on what I've done which I believe will stand ... both moral and legal ... and it is simply incorrect to...

Marder: Your views are understood to be that it started in May 69 at a particularly sensitive time when issues concerned Middle East Korean diplomacy, vietnam....

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Marder: Salt came later:

K: Salt was later ...

Marder .. That you were not involved in determining the length of time on the taps or placing the taps...

K: qualify in the sense that it is quite conceivable members of my staff gave names on my staff of persons who handled particular documents

Marder: Was this essentially from your standpoint an attempt to demonstrate the bona fides of your own staff?

K: If you want to say this on your own that this was one of the motives you would not be far wrong ... you can assume (NOT?)

Mort Halperin was/on my staff because I wanted to persecute him nor that Mort would feel he was not taken care of...

the newsmen end of it was not in my jurisdiction ... may have stimulated it but the subjects were not determined by me.../the reports were cut off earlier...?

K: I'm terrified someone will drag out one document that floated through my office ... but sometime in '70 or earlier ~~ix~~

Marder - the Beecher SALT thing was later (in 71)

K: Gerry Smith asked for an FBI investigation of SALT leaks ... until everything can be seen in its right perspective ... I don't even exclude some names were put on the list for handling classified information

Marder: was there any discussion of wiretaps on newsmen?

Brandon: Everyone knows H. Brandon was a close friend of mine and I was on the phone with him

Marder: Was he tapped?

K: Some of the reports said

some of the (wiretap) reports were going back to me

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murray urged Henry to call back if he wanted to add anything particularly on attribution

About half hour later Henry called back to say:

For your reflection and not for any attribution:

1. The idea that I was instigator of it -- how would it explain that the files were in Erlichman's office

2nd, by considering the fact that correctly or incorrectly my staff was considered a vestige of the previous period it would not follow that my incentive was to get my staff in trouble or ...

Marder: If newsmen were instigated by Erlichman, Haldeman or FBI it would be clear

K: The 17 were requests initiated by me in terms of concern about the security problem ... I can just tell you this is not the way it was ... I don't care what Ruckelshaus said all the more so since I haven't seen him...

Marder: Were there others in ACDA, Pentagon

K: I don't think so to the best of my information I

RECEIVED over the weekend this is the total govt number as far as I know

Marder: was the bulk NSC staff - he left the implication that the totality was in NSC staff plus newsmen

K: That's much too sweeping

Marder: When this process was completed did it not recur subsequently?

K: Before it was completed I no longer received reports. If it started again I was unaware of it.

Marder: Lie detectors in State

K: I did not permit my staff to take them. Any subseq tapping I am unaware of. It is obvious the plumber op was done without knowledge of my office. It's my org. I'm not responsible.



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