

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL MATERIALS STAFF

Tape Subject Log

(rev. 10/06)

Part of a conversation among President Nixon, H. R. (ABob≅) Haldeman, and John D. Ehrlichman in the President's office in the Executive Office Building between 2:49 pm and 3:04 pm on April 13, 1971

Conversation No. 247-4

Ehrlichman: I got a call from, uh, John [N.] Mitchell a few hours ago asking what you had discussed with J. Edgar Hoover, uh, because Hoover today issued a memorandum to his twelve top, top people [unintelligible] which he is to cut [Robert C.] Mardian out of the distribution of some intelligence material: domestic intelligence.

President: [Grunt]

Ehrlichman: [Unintelligible] to strongly imply, in another part of the memorandum, that Hoover and his number one man, [William C.] Sullivan, have been conducting electronic surveillance at your instruction. [Unintelligible] said that he couldn't, he couldn't, uh, divine significance to this, --

President: [Grunt]

Ehrlichman: -- that it would help him a great deal to know what had been discussed and whether or not any of this, uh, was uh, uh, founded on your conversation. Or whether Hoover was using the occurrence of the conversation to begin some kind of maneuver is what he was up to.

President: Tell him, uh, tell him the conversation had no relation to any of this peripheral [unintelligible]. I called him simply to say [unintelligible] get him down [unintelligible]. I know he got my message. Hoover handed the other people

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[unintelligible]. He said developments here at the time that he was Attorney General [unintelligible] or words to that effect [unintelligible].

Haldeman: Um-hm.

President: [Unintelligible] more people attacking him because of his values [unintelligible] and, oh, he raised hell about, uh, [Richard G.] Kleindienst because Kleindienst had called for a investigation.

Haldeman: Um-hm.

President: [Unintelligible] into I, I, uh [unintelligible]. I said, well, I said I was asked [unintelligible] to say apparently Kleindienst [unintelligible].

Haldeman: Kleindienst did make a mistake, then he backed off of it.

President: Well, yeah. Kleindienst --

Haldeman: He meant to say he=d welcome an investigation.

President: -- of that incident.

Haldeman: [Unintelligible].

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: [Unintelligible].

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President: But, you see, Hoover=s absolutely correct in not wanting an investigation to zero in [unintelligible].

Haldeman: What probably happened, you know, we, we set up first of all that domestic intelligence unit idea with, with [Tom C.] Huston, remember? And --

President: [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: -- that is what you call the intelligence chiefs in, in order --

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: -- to do that --

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: -- and have to report that Hoover dissented --

President: Fine, fine.

Haldeman: -- and successfully blocked anything happening. So that didn=t work and we gave up on that. The Attorney General refused to implement it because --

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: -- he didn=t want to have anything to do with --

President: Right.

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Haldeman: -- Tom Huston.

President: Right.

Haldeman: Uh, then we went another route, which was for the Attorney General, Ehrlichman, and me to form a combine that would have the stroke to, to get this done.

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: And we went outside to get a guy to run it. Uh, that guy didn't, wasn't able to stay, and in the process the Attorney General brought Mardian in, and that pulled domestic intelligence division [unintelligible].

Ehrlichman: Internal security.

Haldeman: Internal security, uh division, uh, with the idea of, of his using that funding and that front, in effect, to handle all this. And they got a singular lack of cooperation through all of that from --

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: -- Hoover.

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: But --

President: But you got cooperation --

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Haldeman: -- got strong cooperation from Sullivan. I=ve always gotten it. Hoover has never even, even [unintelligible] eye at anything I=ve asked him to do, or that you=ve asked him about. [Unintelligible]. You know, when it comes to the President, he doesn=t quibble. But this other thing, when it comes to Mardian, he does, and he hasn=t accepted the Mardian apparatus as being under yours, mine, and the Attorney --

President: Yeah, I see.

Haldeman: -- General=s authority in this.

President: Okay.

Haldeman: So he=s circumvented it. Now apparently, he has, has openly -- and, and Mitchell has been pushing on this, in a sense to do it, I mean he=s purposely been laying stuff out [unintelligible].

President: You mean to go with Mardian, or not.

Haldeman: No, to go the other way. Well, when, when, he=s been letting him do whatever he wants. Pushing him to work with Mardian, and when he doesn=t do it, he, he just logs that as one more refusal of, of Hoover to, to cooperate.

President: Mitchell disagrees with him.

Haldeman: That=s right.

President: Okay.

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Haldeman: [Unintelligible] Mardian, and now Mitchell is concerned, I guess, because of this memorandum.

President: [Unintelligible] that=s the total conversation. I --

Ehrlichman: Okay.

President: -- remember it to almost --

Ehrlichman: I=ll --

President: -- the word --

Ehrlichman: I=ll tell John, then he=ll know --

President: It=s so, uh, I doubt that it has any relationship to that. Which, of course, brings you to the other point [unintelligible]. Somebody else has got the goods here. Actually it=s the White House they=re trying to get, you know [unintelligible]. How can we [unintelligible]? We should be --

Ehrlichman: [Unintelligible].

President: -- [unintelligible] should we fight.

Ehrlichman: I was amazed [unintelligible].

President: Yeah, why the hell would the shit put out a memorandum like this [unintelligible]? To protect himself?

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Haldeman: Because he doesn't want to get, >cause he=s worried about this, this bugging business. He=s worried about his, see [unintelligible].

President: Who=ve we had [unintelligible]? We=ve only bugged twice. We=ve bugged people in national security business.

Haldeman: Well --

President: [Henry A.] Kissinger=s staff.

Ehrlichman: I don=t know of any use of it in, uh --

President: Well, let=s face it. Let=s -- We=ve had that Henry Brandon. Well, he had Brandon bugged anyway.

Haldeman: We=ve done some external and some in Kissinger=s office.

President: That=s right. That=s all.

Haldeman: And, uh, all of those are off now.

President: Good [unintelligible]. Those, those are totally justifiable, in my view, because they involve national security. We=ve never had one on a domestic matter that I know of.

Ehrlichman: Not that I know of.

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- President: [Unintelligible] bug for example, Cabinet officers and other jerks like that. They all talk publicly about it.
- Haldeman: [Unintelligible].
- Ehrlichman: The only, the only domestic one that I know of was done through the Secret Service.
- President: Oh yes, I know.
- Ehrlichman: And, uh --
- President: [Unintelligible] well, that involves [unintelligible]. Well, that=s good to know.
- Haldeman: [Unintelligible].
- President: [Unintelligible].
- Ehrlichman: The tailing stuff that we=ve done -- never discussed it, never discussed it.
- President: Doesn=t sound like -- I-in fact, if anything my conversation was reassuring. I figure this, that John and I have got to take him on, John. But I figure the way to take him on is to build him up first. Hell, he, he may be sus-suspicious enough to [unintelligible] and I just felt wishing him well [unintelligible].
- Haldeman: He begins this whole combine of security. He doesn=t want to have his stuff known to other people. And he just may be right. He=s gotta trust somebody.

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President: Yeah. Well he --

Haldeman: [Unintelligible].

President: He is right about this -- that he knows whether anybody knows a God damn thing, that=s the real problem. He told me that you were the only one he=d want to talk to in the White House. Said, AI don=t want to talk to [unintelligible] Mardian or Mitchell.≡ Said, AI just want to deal with one man.≡ I said, AFine.≡

Haldeman: [Unintelligible] is not in the White House; he=s in the Justice Department.

President: Wherever he was or is or anything. I don=t remember that Mardian=s name came up.

Haldeman: Probably --

President: [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: Mardian=s --

President: Hoover said there was, he says a lot of people, he says I get all kinds of requests, he says I also want you to know [unintelligible] one man.

Haldeman: Well, at that time he had [Clark R.] Mollenhoff and, and, uh --

President: Oh yeah, yeah.

Haldeman: -- some other things on there and [unintelligible].

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President: John, we=ve got to get him out of there, I mean, with all those God damn [unintelligible]. Now I think the opportunity to get him out arises due to the fact [Forename uncertain] Boggs [unintelligible] get a letter. If we can get a letter from three, signed -- get, get Congressmen, Senators -- Congressmen to sign it. A letter, three -- for three hundred Congressmen to sign, three to four hundred, and then the ones that don=t sign the damn letter [unintelligible] I=d say that we retain him [unintelligible], that we had confidence, uh, confidence in J. Edgar Hoover, that and for me to say that disapproval [unintelligible]. We get that letter, then I think that John and I have got to bring him in say now look here [unintelligible]. But we=ve got to take it, we gotta fly it, and we must not have without [Spiro T.] Agnew. They=re gonna try to do it as an election issue, to make Hoover an election issue. I think they will make an election issue --

Haldeman: That=s right.

Ehrlichman: Him, I=ve got the names.

President: He seems to have --

Haldeman: [Unintelligible]. Private detective.

President: [Unintelligible]. Private detective?

Ehrlichman: Yeah, pr- Negro pri-private detective.

President: Who? Go after us?

Ehrlichman: -- to, uh, well presumably to, uh, run down, uh, electronic, uh, surveillance, uh --

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- President: I thought that Hoover never did Congress, uh, at least, except that I think he did my, uh --
- Ehrlichman: He=s under investigation on that contractor deal [unintelligible].
- Haldeman: Right.
- Ehrlichman: -- may have been, but not by the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation]. He was up for governor for a while.
- Haldeman: Not a lot of people [unintelligible].
- President: John --
- Haldeman: Other than the FBI
- President: The point is, bugging has to be done. Don=t you agree?
- Ehrlichman: Sure.
- President: I hate to think it=s ordered though [unintelligible]. I hate the idea of it, but hell, it has to be done and we just, a guy in his right mind has got to assume he=s [unintelligible] .
- Ehrlichman: [John E. (AJack≅)] Ingersoll put out a statement over the weekend that had him saying they=ve used forty bugs in, uh, narcotics work. As a result, a direct result of which they have captured I don=t know how many millions of dollars worth of, uh, narcotics and arrested [unintelligible] many arrests.