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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

FM THE SITUATION ROOM

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STAR-NEWS EDITORIAL

KISSINGER AND ELLSBERG

FORMER WHITE HOUSE AIDE CHARLES COLSON ONCE SAID HE WOULD WALK OVER HIS GRANDMOTHER IF IT WOULD HELP PRESIDENT NIXON. NOW IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK AS IF HE MIGHT ALSO WALK OVER SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER TO HELP HIMSELF.

COLSON, WHO IS AMONG SIX INDICTED IN THE BREAK-IN AT THE OFFICE OF DANIEL ELLSBERG'S PSYCHIATRIST, HAS FILED AN AFFIDAVIT IN COURT SUGGESTING THAT KISSINGER WAS HIP-DEEP IN THE PLANNING THAT LED TO ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WHITE HOUSE "PLUMBERS". THE OSTENSIBLE PURPOSE OF DRAGGING KISSINGER INTO THE MATTER IS TO SHOW THAT THE BREAK-IN, WHICH WAS CARRIED OUT BY THE PLUMBERS, WAS MOTIVATED BY CONCERN OVER NATIONAL SECURITY.

IT NOT ONLY IS POSSIBLE, BUT VERY LIKELY, THAT CONCERN OVER NATIONAL SECURITY WAS THE REASON PRESIDENT NIXON ORDERED ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLUMBERS UNIT. COLSON'S AFFIDAVIT INDICATED THAT MR. NIXON WAS LIVID ABOUT LEAKS OF CLASSIFIED MATERIAL TO THE PRESS AND WANTED THEM STOPPED "WHATEVER THE COST." AND THERE IS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT KISSINGER, WHO THEN WAS MR. NIXON'S NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, WAS EXTREMELY DISTURBED BY THE NUMEROUS LEAKS, INCLUDING THE MASSIVE LEAK BY ELLSBERG OF THE PENTAGON PAPERS. COLSON'S AFFIDAVIT SUGGESTS THAT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF FEDERAL INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS AT THE TIME THAT RAISED A "SUSPICION THAT DR. ELLSBERG WAS ACTING ON BEHALF OF A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT IN RELEASING CLASSIFIED INFORMATION"-THOUGH NO PROOF OF THAT HAS EVER BEEN FORTHCOMING.

THE UNFORTUNATE ASPECT OF COLSON'S AFFIDAVIT IS THAT IN LINKING KISSINGER AND THE PLUMBERS, IT CARRIES THE IMPLICATION, WHETHER INTENDED OR NOT, THAT KISSINGER WAS IN SOME WAY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BREAK-IN OF THE PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE. WHETHER KISSINGER PARTICIPATED IN THE DISCUSSIONS THAT LED TO ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLUMBERS UNIT IS NOT THE ISSUE HERE. PERHAPS HE DID, BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN HE KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT THE ACTUAL ACTIVITIES OF THE PLUMBERS OR THAT HE CONDONED THEM; HE HAS REPEATEDLY DENIED THAT HE DID.

AS MUCH AS A DEFENDANT IN A CRIMINAL CASE IS ENTITLED TO DEFEND HIMSELF, IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF KISSINGER'S REPUTATION WERE TO BECOME BESMIRCHED IN THIS FASHION. KISSINGER, OF COURSE, IS NOT INDISPENSABLE. BUT HE IS ONE OF THE FEW NIXON ADMINISTRATION FIGURES TO COME OUT OF WATERGATE WEARING A WHITE HAT, AND HIS TIRELESS AND DISTINGUISHED EFFORTS IN THE CAUSE OF WORLD PEACE ARE RECOGNIZED BY NEARLY EVERYONE. TO DRAG HIS NAME THROUGH THE ELLSBERG CASE UNJUSTIFIABLY NOT ONLY WOULD BE AN INJUSTICE TO HIM BUT COULD REDUCE HIS EFFECTIVNESS IN WORLD AFFAIRS. SOMEWHERE THE TENDENCY TO SUCK EVERYONE UNDER THE WATERGATE WAVES HAS TO BE HALTED.

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