

presidential election between Nixon and Humphrey, Johnson decided he wanted us to check on the phone calls made from vice-presidential candidate Spiro Agnew's campaign plane during the stopover in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Johnson believed that the Republicans were in contact with the South Vietnamese government, and that they were trying to keep the South Vietnamese away from the conference table in an effort to sabotage Johnson's Paris peace talks. LBJ suspected that Mrs. Anna Chennault, an influential and wealthy Washington widow who also headed a group called "Concerned Asians for Nixon," was carrying messages between Agnew and the South Vietnamese Embassy. The president's orders to the FBI (by way of DeLoach) were for the Albuquerque office to conduct a careful check of all outgoing phone calls made by the then vice-presidential candidate Spiro Agnew on the date of 2 November 1968, at the time he was in Albuquerque. Johnson also wanted our agents to put Mrs. Chennault and the South Vietnamese Embassy under physical surveillance and to put wiretaps on their telephones, which he did.

Naturally, this was a top-secret operation, and DeLoach conveyed to Hoover the president's concern for keeping it that way late in 1968. DeLoach reported that Bromley Smith had called him from the White House to pass on LBJ's instructions that all copies of messages being forwarded from the FBI to the White House in connection with the South Vietnamese Embassy and Mrs. Chennault were to be treated in the strictest confidence, and that all precautions were to be taken to protect these communications. Smith said that this situation might very well "blow the roof off of the political race yet."

DeLoach was also concerned about the secrecy of the operation, so he recommended to Hoover that the file concerning these taps be maintained in the Special File Room, and that because of the highly sensitive nature of the information contained in the file, it should be afforded strictly limited handling.

We never came up with any damaging evidence against Agnew or Mrs. Chennault, so after Nixon won the election Johnson called off the physical surveillance on Mrs. Chennault and the South Vietnamese and cancelled the wiretap on Mrs. Chennault. But, as DeLoach put it in a memo to Hoover dated 7 November 1968, Johnson "de-

sired us to keep in operation."

In retrospect ahead and in view have revealed