

House Snoopers Stopped by Hotel

By Jack Anderson

Two House investigators sought to eavesdrop electronically the other day on a radical youth group's convention in a Chicago hotel. But they were stopped by the hotel president, who considered the surveillance illegal.

The investigators, who work for the House Internal Security Committee, come under the direct supervision of Ohio's John Ashbrook, the ranking Republican and personable right winger, who is challenging President Nixon for the GOP presidential nomination.

Reached on the campaign trail in Arizona, Ashbrook said he thought his investigators' conduct was improper. "If they had asked me about it, I would have said no," he told my associate Brit Hume.

The incident occurred at the Midland Hotel where the far-left Young Workers Liberation League held its convention May 5 to 8.

The committee's chief minority investigator, Herbert Rommerstein, acknowledged that he and colleague Richard Norusis were present as part of their assignment to investigate "The Theory and Practice of Communism."

They arrived two days before the convention began, and Norusis registered in the hotel under a phony address. At his request, a hotel engineer wired the convention room so that its loudspeaker could be monitored secretly

from elsewhere in the building.

Eugene Pekow, president of the hotel, said the staff apparently believed the investigators were FBI men. When he learned of the wiring, he asked to see them.

The hotel manager brought Rommerstein and Norusis to his office where they identified themselves as being from the HISC. Pekow told them he believed the wiring was illegal and read them a section of an Illinois law prohibiting such eavesdropping.

The men stuck around the hotel during the convention anyway and made use of the room Norusis had been assigned, although they didn't pay for it.

McGovern and FDR?

Responding to the charge that he is the Barry Goldwater of the Democrats, Sen. George McGovern may soon begin claiming instead a likeness to one of his party's deities: Franklin Roosevelt.

McGovern's sweeping reform proposals have made party regulars nervous that his liberalism will alienate all but the most leftist Democrats and thus re-elect President Nixon.

But McGovern has been receiving different counsel from such advisers as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., the prolific historian best known as a biographer of Franklin Roosevelt.

In a recent memo, he told McGovern, "Actually the situation does not resemble the

Republican 1964 situation in more than the most superficial way.

"Then Goldwater, as the candidate of the right wing of the Republican party, tried to reverse the direction of his party and move it somewhere back into the past."

"Your effort, I take it, is quite the opposite . . . you are trying to put the party back into the mainstream and to plant it on the broadest possible platform—that is, on the needs of the future."

"In this regard your situation—indeed, the general 1972 situation—resembles Roosevelt in 1932 much more than Goldwater in 1964.

"In 1972, as in 1932, the nation is in a condition of political and economic deadlock . . . a Republican President has shown himself vacillating and callous in his attitude toward domestic social problems.

"Now, as then, the Republican administration prides itself on disdaining the dramatic and spectacular, on practicing a 'low profile,' which is another way of priding itself on doing as little as possible.

"What FDR had going for him was a strong sense of the insufficiency of existing social and economic policies, a strong instinct for the future and a strong concern for what he called the 'forgotten man'—largely forgotten again in our own day.

"Above all, he put together a new coalition—a coalition

that revitalized the Democratic party and ushered in a new epoch in American politics. That is what you have the opportunity to do now.

"You have already begun to bring together the Kennedy and McCarthy forces of 1968—the blacks, browns and low-income whites who followed RFK, the suburbanites and Republicans who followed McCarthy and the students and intellectuals who followed them both. In Wisconsin, you showed that you could add the farmers.

"The important thing, as you have so often said yourself, is to make our base as broad as possible.

"The nation cannot be united by rhetoric. It can only be united by programs and policies . . . you can do this; and, as you argue the case for new directions, you will be perceived, as FDR eventually was, as the one truly unifying and reconciling candidate."

Panda Postscript

Those lovable pandas from Red China cost the American taxpayer some \$600,000.

In answer to a query from Rep. John Murphy (D-N.Y.), administration officials have conceded that \$500,000 is being spent to house the pandas at Washington's zoo. Another \$98,000 was expended to transport America's gift of musk oxen to Red China and return the pandas by Air Force C-141 to the United States.

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