

LBJ Made Secret Deal on Wiretaps

By Drew Pearson
and Jack Anderson

In order to get Senate action on his crime control bill, President Johnson has made a secret deal with Sen. John McClellan, (D-Ark.), not to veto the wiretap amendments.

Senate conservatives also expect to shove down the President's throat some amendments overturning the Supreme Court's controversial decisions on the rights of criminal suspects. In effect, the amendments would knock out the safeguards which the High Court has upheld in recent years and would virtually negate the authority of the Federal courts to review criminal cases.

As chairman of the Senate Criminal Laws and Procedures Subcommittee, McClellan refused last year to process the crime control bill unless the President would agree to legalizing telephone taps. This was made plain by the dour McClellan at a private White House meeting with the President last fall.

LBJ happens to feel strongly that people ought to be able to talk on the telephone without Government snoops listening in. He uses the telephone constantly himself and suspects his own wires are tapped by inquisitive Government agencies. He also is a great admirer of Chief Justice Earl Warren, who is a strong defender of constitutional freedoms.

Rather than permit the vital crime measure to die, however, the President called McClellan to the White House recently and agreed to his terms. LBJ not only promised not to veto the wiretap provisions but to persuade House Judiciary Chairman Emanuel Celler not to tie them up in the House.

Once McClellan turned the crime bill loose, however, Sen. Sam Ervin (D-N.C.), came to him with certain hamstringing amendments. These were carefully worded to overrule the Supreme Court on the rights of citizens who are arrested by the police.

Ervin, an astute constitutional lawyer, also phrased the amendments to forestall the Supreme Court from ruling on their constitutionality. Since it is questionable whether Ervin's clever language can really prevent this, Senate conservatives are gambling on a switch of one vote on the closely divided Court to uphold the amendments.

FBI boss J. Edgar Hoover also sent his emissaries around to see McClellan about incorporating into the crime bill some additional clauses that would give the FBI a legislative monopoly over police training.

This is opposed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which has complained that the FBI in the past has discriminated against

police who refuse to kowtow to Hoover. The TACP wants authority to set up its own regional training centers.

But Hoover, going behind the back of Attorney General Ramsey Clark, has persuaded McClellan to amend the crime bill to grant the FBI monopoly.

Meanwhile, it looks as if the Senate hardheads are unwilling to take action against rampant crime unless they are also permitted to ride roughshod over individual rights.

Is Thailand Next?

The Pentagon isn't shouting about it, but it has had to send more troops into Thailand. While truce talks are scheduled for Vietnam the situation in Thailand has deteriorated.

It may well be that the United States will find itself with troops being transferred from one war to another in Southeast Asia.

At present more than 43,000 American troops are stationed in Thailand. The Air Force is operating eight bases throughout the country. This is more troops and more bases than the United States had in South Vietnam between 1954 and 1964. At the end of 1964, there were only 13,000 U.S. troops in South Vietnam.

In addition to 43,000 U.S. troops now in Thailand, weapons and equipment have been stockpiled to support a far

larger force. Meanwhile the Communists are stepping up their infiltration of the country, and guerrilla activity has increased in three separate areas.

The United States is bound by treaty to help defend Thailand from a Communist takeover, and it seems certain that Thai authorities in the face of a Communist threat will invoke the treaty. The difficulty is that Thailand is a monarchy supported by a military dictatorship, with almost no vestige of democracy. There is extreme wealth at the top, extreme poverty at the bottom, and corruption running rampant through the ruling class.

It's a country made to order for Communist revolt, and if the United States is going to defend it, we should begin now to demand basic social and economic reforms.

Tax Loopholes

Hard-hitting Sen. Stephen Young (D-Ohio) is demanding that tax loopholes be closed and an excess profits tax be levied against war profiteers before the general public has to pay a tax increase.

Young reveals that 35 Americans with incomes over \$500,000 paid no income tax at all in 1965, the last year for which full statistics are available. Among these were five individuals with incomes above \$5 million a year.

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