

Report: LBJ put wiretap on Humphrey

New book alleges distrust

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lyndon Johnson was so fearful that Hubert Humphrey would break with him over Vietnam in an attempt to win the 1968 election he had the FBI bug his own vice president, a new biography of LBJ discloses.

Boston University historian Robert Dallek, who has researched the life of the 36th president for the last 14 years, revealed that Mr. Johnson, even though he had withdrawn as a candidate in March, secretly encouraged a draft-Johnson movement at the Democratic convention in Chicago that summer. He may have sought a draft for no other reason than the ego-satisfying opportunity to turn it down, Mr. Dallek writes.

Mr. Dallek's book, *Flawed Giant*, to be published by Oxford University Press in April, sheds new light on the pivotal 1968 election, in which Republican Richard Nixon defeated Mr.

Humphrey by a hair.

Mr. Nixon's election led to escalation of the war in Vietnam, more than doubling American losses there, and ultimately to the Watergate scandal and the first presidential resignation.

Mr. Johnson had deep misgivings about Mr. Humphrey, his vice president. He "considered him too soft and too much of a bleeding-heart liberal who would have trouble making tough decisions," Mr. Johnson felt, according to Mr. Dallek.

Worse yet, in his heart Mr. Johnson believed that Mr. Humphrey "would abandon the war the minute he took the oath of office," leaving it to history to label Mr. Johnson the first president to have lost a war, Mr. Dallek writes.

"He understood that Mr. Humphrey was under great pressure to break with him," Mr. Dallek says. "To keep close tabs



ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Lyndon Johnson, left, feared Vice President Hubert Humphrey would shift U.S. policy on Vietnam, the book says.

on the inner workings of Mr. Humphrey's campaign, Mr. Johnson had the FBI tap Mr. Humphrey's phones. If Mr. Humphrey were going to come out against the war, Mr. Johnson wanted advance notice and a chance to dissuade him."

While historians have known that Mr. Johnson secretly taped some of his telephone conversations, the only tapes released so far have been those from the first months of the Johnson presidency following the 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Mr. Dallek's book, based on interviews with former Johnson and Humphrey aides, offers the first evidence that Mr. Johnson

ordered wiretaps on Mr. Humphrey's phones in the vice presidential office.

Unenthusiastic about the prospects of either a Humphrey or a Nixon presidency, Mr. Johnson, according to Mr. Dallek, privately urged Republican Gov. Nelson Rockefeller of New York that spring to get into the race — advice Mr. Rockefeller took too late to head off a Nixon victory at the GOP convention.

Because of his distrust of Mr. Humphrey's belief in the war, Mr. Johnson secretly supported Mr. Nixon and sometimes acted to undercut Mr. Humphrey — forbidding his aides, for example, from publicly endorsing him.