

Bugging caper raises

A rare glimpse of the right-

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WASHINGTON — The arrest of five men caught trying to bug the Democratic Party headquarters in Washington on the weekend has provided a rare glimpse into the right-wing underground in the United States.

Three of the five men who allegedly broke into the Democrats' offices have been linked with the Republican Party, the Central Intelligence Agency, the armed forces, the John Birch Society and anti-Communist Cuban exile organizations.

It may never be clear whether these men were working on behalf of one or perhaps a number of these groups when they were arrested early Saturday morning in the offices of the Democratic National Committee in the luxurious office-apartment-hotel complex called the Watergate.

The five suspects, wearing rubber surgical gloves, were not carrying any weapons but they had burglary tools, electronic surveillance devices, two 35-millimetre camers and a Minox, the miniature German-made "spy" camera.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has taken charge of the case on the basis that the five men may have broken federal laws. They were arrested by Washington police for burglary.

Speculation about the bugging attempt, and who led the break-in party, has centred largely around two of the men arrested.

The first is Bernard Barker, who was described by The New York Times yesterday as one of the top planners of the CIA's abortive attempt to invade Cuba in 1961. Barker, born in Cuba, is a real estate man in Miami and is known for his ties with the Republican Party in Florida.

Colonel in reserve

The second man is James McCord, 53, who has been identified as the security co-ordinator for the Committee to re-elect the President—the central 1972 campaign organization for President Richard Nixon. McCord, a colonel in the Air Force Reserve, also holds a separate contract to provide security services to the Republican National Committee.

He retired from the CIA in 1970 after 19 years of service during which he reportedly played a role in CIA operations designed to overthrow the Cuban regime of Fidel Castro. The New York Times says he was involved in the 1961 Bay of Pigs operation.

The third man with intriguing connections is Frank Sturgis, who was security chief in Castro's air force for a few months before he defected to the United States in 1959. He often calls himself Frank Fiorini and has publicly claimed a role in number of anti-Castro actions up until 1968.

Sturgis, who had to fight to regain his U.S. citizenship after losing it for serving in the Cuban armed forces, has most recently been identified as an organizer for the John Birch Society. Along with Barker, he showed up at a recent meeting in Miami to support a demonstration of Cuban exiles favoring President Nixon's blockade of North Vietnam.

Little is known about the two other men who were arrested. They are Eugenio Martinez and Virgilio Gonzales, both identified as Cuban exiles living in Miami.

many questions

-wing underground in U.S.

Frank Wills, the Watergate guard who summoned police, reportedly said he saw a sixth man as he made his rounds before his discovery of the break-in. He and police found the suspects in the headquarters.

But the strongest indicator of a sixth participant came when police found a roll of tape in a suspect's room on the second floor, similar to the tape that was used to keep locks from closing on doors leading from the basement garage to the fire staircase.

Spokesmen for the CIA and the Republican Party both quickly denied any knowledge of or responsibility for the attempt to bug the Democratic Party offices.

It is conceivable that the denials are honest ones and that the men were working on their own initiative. But it is more difficult to believe that the Republicans and the CIA would not have received any information which the men would have obtained if they had been successful.

Liberal and left-wing groups have charged for years that the CIA is involved in domestic espionage activi-

ties in violation of the law which restricts it to foreign operations.

The CIA has been relying on the uprooted and fiercely anti-Communist Cuban exiles to participate in some of the agency's most secret and delicate operations throughout the world.

While everyone waited for more facts yesterday, spokesmen for the Democratic Party were still reluctant to charge that the CIA or the Republican Party was directly responsible for the weekend bugging raid. They took their cues from Democratic National Chairman Lawrence O'Brien, who called for a thorough Government investigation.

Owes explanation

Presidential contender Senator Hubert Humphrey said he hadn't "the slightest idea" whether the Republican Party was behind the incident but said

President Nixon owes the country an explanation.

In Key Biscayne, Mr. Nixon was depicted by the Florida White House as taking no interest in the break-in and was ignoring the incident.

"This is something that he wouldn't get involved in," said Ronald Ziegler, White House press secretary, adding that Mr. Nixon had not discussed it with anyone, including John Mitchell, chairman of the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Mr. Mitchell, former U.S. Attorney-General, expressed mystification when he was first confronted with the facts Sunday. He implied that McCord had not recently been working actively for the Republicans and said he was ignorant of McCord's other activities and other clients.

Many unanswered questions about the bugging caper remain. The Washington Post, for instance, quoted an unnamed wiretapping expert who said he couldn't understand why the job was so bungled and so unprofessional.

"This is fantastic," the wiretapper said. "That kind of (bugging) equipment went out with high-button shoes. These guys have got to be circus bums."

Political observers also wonder why the raiding party was so large. Two men could have probably done the job as quickly and more quietly than five.