

GOP Says 'Bug' Hearings Would Hurt

7/11/72
By Bob Woodward
and Paul Valentine

Washington Post Staff Writers

The Committee for the Re-election of the President said yesterday that civil court hearings in connection with the alleged break-in and attempted bugging of Democratic headquarters here could cause "incalculable" damage to President Nixon's campaign.

In a request filed yesterday in U.S. District Court, lawyers for the committee asked that hearings on the Democrats' \$1

million civil suit against the Nixon committee be postponed at least until after the Nov. 7 election.

In court papers, the Nixon committee said that any hearings before the election could deter their campaign workers, discourage campaign contributions, force disclosure of confidential campaign information and provide the Democrats with a reason to hold press conferences.

These statements contrast with those of then-Nixon cam-

paign manager, John N. Mitchell, who called the Democrats' \$1 million suit a "political stunt" when it was filed June 29.

Democratic National Chairman Lawrence F. O'Brien filed the \$1 million civil action against the Nixon committee and the five suspects arrested in the June 17 break-in just two days after it was disclosed that one of the suspects was the security coordinator for Mr. Nixon's campaign effort.

The suit seeks damages on the grounds that the break-in

interfered with the First Amendment rights of all Democrats.

In addition, O'Brien said that there is "a developing clear line to the White House" and cited what he called the potential involvement of special counsel to the President, Charles W. Colson.

Colson was only indirectly linked to the break-in because of his recommendation that the White House hire E. Howard Hunt Jr. as a consultant. Hunt's name was found in two

Campaign

address books belonging to two of the five suspects. An uncashed check made out to a Rockville country club and signed by Hunt also was found among the suspects' belongings.

Hunt, a former CIA employee has since been fired from the White House job and has disappeared from sight.

In yesterday's court papers seeking the postponement of hearings on the suit until after Nov. 7, the Nixon committee lawyer Kenneth W.

See INCIDENT, A6, Col. 1

INCIDENT, From A1

Parkinson seemed to be saying that a summer of hearings on it could inflict a damaging political wound.

Such hearings would "allow Mr. O'Brien and the Demo-

cratic National Committee to utilize this lawsuit as a forum from which to accuse this committee of complicity in criminal conduct throughout the 1972 election campaign," Parkinson said in the brief.

The committee again denied any involvement in the break-in and said repeated mention in the news of the "coincidental employment" of suspect James W. McCord Jr. the former GOP security chief, would be particularly damaging.

Parkinson said that the testimony of the five suspects would be necessary as part of the committee's defense.

Since such testimony could be used against the suspects in the criminal case, the committee said they would be unable to get it until after the burglary charges against the suspects were disposed of in court.

Thus, Parkinson said, the civil action hearings should be postponed until after the conclusion of both the election campaign and the criminal case.