

McGOVERN TAKES SECURITY STEPS

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Daily Checks Seeking Taps on Phones and Devices

for Listening in Rooms

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George McGovern's Presidential campaign has tightened "defense security" at its national headquarters here following reports of bugging of the Democrats' Watergate offices in June, according to members of the Senator's campaign staff.

But the officials say that the steps, which include daily checks for telephone taps and room listening devices in offices of key campaign officials, have been taken reluctantly. "They were forced upon us by circumstances and the kind of campaign it is this year," according to one official.

And the officials continue to dismiss as entirely unfounded charges by the Republicans and others that they have engaged in, or even entertained suggestions about, initiating some "offensive security" operations of their own against the Nixon campaign.

George V. Cunningham, Mr. McGovern's administrative assistant on Capitol Hill, and the closest thing the Democratic campaign has to a security chief, explained that because the McGovern operation depends so heavily on volunteer workers to fill a variety of jobs, it was impossible to screen all of them as possible Republican "spies."

"We take their names and address and a spot check is made, but we just don't have the personnel to make a big check," Mr. Cunningham said.

He added, "It's not so much who they are, it's where they are in the building," referring to the aging eight-story McGovern campaign office in downtown Washington. "We don't use any volunteers on the fourth floor, where the political decisions are being made, and we're very suspicious about people who 'pop in' there for one reason or another."

"But any volunteer can get on the first floor, although I'm not so sure he could learn anything on the fourth floor either, even if he were up there."

Nevertheless, all office telephones are checked for possible taps every two weeks, and those used by the most important staff members, such as Lawrence F. O'Brien, the national campaign chairman, are examined each night.

Mr. O'Brien's telephone in the Democrats' Watergate office was one of two allegedly bugged during late May and early June by an operation run by James W. McCord Jr., then the Nixon campaign's security coordinator. Mr. O'Brien was the party's national chairman at the time.

Report by Magazine

Meanwhile, Jeb Stuart Magruder, a deputy director of the committee to re-elect the President, was identified in a report to be published in this week's issue of Time magazine as the man who approved the setting up of the Republican security operation.

That operation, according to Time, and to sources close to the investigation, eventually led to the placing of microphones and telephone taps in offices of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate.

The Time report, released in advance of publication, says that Mr. Magruder authorized the spending of as much as \$250,000 on "political intelligence operations," a phrase the magazine attributed to sources it described as Justice Department attorneys.

The magazine quotes these sources as saying that Mr. Magruder, a former White House staff member, hired another former White House staffer, G. Gordon Liddy, to lead the political intelligence squad. Payments for the operation were made in cash to Mr. Liddy by Hugh Sloan, then the committee's treasurer, it was said.

Mr. Liddy was one of those indicted for conspiracy to violate laws against electronic surveillance.

Mr. Magruder was unavailable tonight for comment on the magazine report.

Mr. Cunningham stressed that although only "defensive measures, rather than any kind of offensive measures" had been implemented by the Democrats, "we would like not to have to do any of it."

He and other McGovern aides denied in the strongest terms recent charges by Clark MacGregor, President Nixon's campaign director, that the Democrats had "planted" spies inside the Nixon campaign.

They also disclaimed charges that the Democrats had played a part in what the Republicans have described as "political and physical harrassment" of the President's re-election effort, including "firebombings and arson" at Nixon campaign offices in California.

A Nixon campaign spokesman said yesterday that Mr. MacGregor would not identify his source for the spy charge, beyond saying he was a "highly reliable" member of the press who had received the information directly from Richard Dougherty, the Senator's press secretary.