

Barry Still Wary of LBJ Briefings

By DAVID WISE

Herald Tribune News Service

WASHINGTON—Sen. Barry Goldwater, wary in the past of being "inhibited" by too much official information, so far has not asked for the top-secret intelligence briefing offered by President Johnson.

Normally, it might be assumed that a Republican Presidential nominee would hardly be able to wait to get a peek at classified information. But Goldwater's past statements about such briefings indicate he may possibly be eyeing the President's offer in the manner of a gift horse, Trojan style. Tony Smith, a Goldwater press secretary, said yesterday that when Goldwater "feels he needs or wants them (security briefings) he will ask."

The President, on April 29, offered intelligence briefings to all "major candidates" because "those who seek to discuss great public issues must be informed on those issues." Some pre-convention Republican contenders accepted the offer and subsequently received briefings.

Goldwater, however, turned down the offer, which he called "basically unwise" in a letter to Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

The briefings, Goldwater added, "might be used as energetically to silence debate as to serve debate. Having received information in one of these briefings, a candidate, whether he had the information from another source or not, might then be officially or morally inhibited from using the information."

Goldwater also termed the offer "an offhand political gesture" and noted that "when the two parties have actually selected their candidates such action has been taken as a matter of course." If he were to be nominated for President, Goldwater added, he would expect that the question of briefings would be discussed "as a separate matter."

Presidents since 1944 have followed the custom of making intelligence and security information available to nominees. The idea is to give an "out" party nominee equal treatment, since an incumbent president has access to a vast

array of secret information, and prevent the opponent from treading by accident or otherwise on security subjects.

The New York Herald Tribune disclosed on July 18, in a story that appeared in The Examiner the following day, that officials of the Johnson Administration are convinced, rightly or wrongly, that Goldwater is already privately receiving information from military and intelligence sources. They think this is why he turned down the President's April 20 offer. Goldwater is an Air Force reserve major general and, in his letter to Rusk, he said "members of the Congress and the Senate are not without information."

In a press conference April 23, the President was questioned about the matter of intelligence briefing. He was asked: "Will they be precluded from using it in the campaign?" He answered:

"... Top secret will not be used by anyone. The President will be very careful to take no advantage of any other candidate in this matter..."