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EVENING STAR

SUSPECT IN BREAK-IN

Barker Tied to Bay of Pigs

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MIAMI — Bernard L. Barker, one of five men arrested during a break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters in Washington, reportedly was an important figure in planning the Central Intelligence Agency's ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961.

He and another suspect also reportedly helped plan a demonstration last month in support of President Nixon's decision to mine North Vietnamese ports.

Barker's anti-Castro activism seems to have been shared by at least three and perhaps all of those arrested with him early Saturday. One of the others, Frank Sturgis, also known as Frank Fiorini, has a history of exploits as a soldier of fortune bent on helping to overthrow Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

Jose E. de la Torre, leader of an anti-Castro organization that has sought support for an exile invasion of Cuba, said Barker "used to work for the CIA here at the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion. That was public knowledge. It was no mystery. He was a sort of assistant to the man who was in charge here for the CIA, a man named Bender."

Barker Ex-Marine

Barker, who has a real estate business in Miami, reportedly is a Cuban native but a U.S. citizen and an ex-Marine.

The New York Times, in a Washington dispatch, also identified Barker's CIA role in the invasion, citing Miami sources. The Times called Barker the apparent leader of Saturday's raid, and it said he is associated with Cuban exiles in Miami who have "links to the Republican party." It identified these exiles as Manuel Artime, military leader of the 1961 invasion, and attorney Miguel A. Suarez.

Artime, the Times said, "is reported to have business connections with prominent Cuban exiles in Miami who in turn have links to the Republican party." Suarez, a self-styled "Nixonian," was said to have represented Florida's Cuban community in dealings with former GOP Gov. Claude B. Kirk Jr.

There was no evidence to indicate that Artime or Suarez was connected with the Washington raid, the Times said. They could not be reached immediately for comment.

Robert Rosasco, Dade County (Miami) GOP chairman, said that if Barker himself had any political influence, it was "not with the Dade County organization." Rosasco said he never heard of Barker.

Barker did, however, campaign with Fiorini in support

of Nixon's move to block supplies from North Vietnamese ports, exile sources told the Miami Herald. The sources said the two men, claiming to represent an organization of captive anti-Communist nations, helped plan and carry out a demonstration by Cubans in Miami last month in favor of Nixon's action.

Another of the five suspects, James McCord Jr. of Rockville, Md., who has worked in recent weeks on security preparations for the Republicans, also has been identified with the Bay of Pigs invasion. The CIA said he retired from that agency in 1970.

Little is known about the two other suspects, Virgilio R. Gonzales, a locksmith, and Eugenio R. Martinez, a real estate agent.

Conjecture on Links

Whether the suspects' past involvement in anti-Castro activities was related in any way to the raid on the Democratic party office could only be a matter of conjecture.

The leading candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, Sen. George McGovern, had advocated steps toward improving U.S. relations with the Castro regime. So has Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, who has figured in speculation about the nomination.

In a letter to the editor of

the Miami News, published March 30, 1960, Fiorini — he signed that name rather than Sturgis — objected to previous letters from readers demanding better U.S.-Cuban relations.

In Cuba, he wrote, "we have seen on multiple occasions how human rights were violated, how representative democracy has been denied people, how the U.S. government has been accused of imperialism, our President and State Department officials ridiculed, and worst of all, how Castro has unfurled the Communist banner in America, trying to subvert our Western civilization."

"I am an American citizen, and it was my love for democracy and personal liberty that led me to fight against Batista. But today I denounce Fidel Castro as a traitor to the revolution and a traitor to America."

Defections in '59

Fiorini, 48, has previously said that he was security chief for Castro's Air Force headed by Maj. Pedro Diaz Lanz. Both men defected in 1959. Fiorini was stripped of his U.S. citizenship for serving in the Cuban armed forces but won reinstatement.

He has claimed roles in a number of anti-Castro actions.