

Political bugging figure reportedly fled country

New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — E. Howard Hunt Jr., the former senior Central Intelligence Agency official now sought by federal agents in connection with last month's raid on the Democratic National Committee here, was reliably reported today to have fled to Europe, possibly to Spain.

This report came from persons close to Hunt as federal authorities disclosed that since early last week a large force of Federal Bu-

reau of Investigation agents had been searching for Hunt throughout the United States.

At the same time, Spanish embassy officials here said that Hunt's wife, Dorothy, long an employe of the embassy, had told them as late as the latter part of May that her husband was still working for the White House.

This appeared to contradict a White House statement shortly after the raid on the Democratic headquarters at the Watergate office

building here that Hunt, whose name had been linked with the June 17 break-in, had completed his consultant status in the presidential office on March 29.

Mrs. Hunt has been a part-time employe of the Spanish embassy, whose officials said that she had told them in May that "my husband works for the White House and he is away traveling so much that I hardly ever see him."

Because of the publicity surrounding Hunt in what was rapidly becoming a major political affair here, the Spanish embassy decided to terminate her employment effective yesterday, with a month's severance pay.

Hunt, who played a key role in organizing the CIA's abortive Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, was linked to the Watergate raid after the police found his name and home telephone number in the address books of two of the alleged raiders, both of them Cuban-born, when the group was arrested at the Democratic offices.

Although Hunt spoke to FBI agents three days after the Watergate raid, he refused, according to federal officials, to answer any questions. Subsequently, he informed his friends that he was leaving Washington and for the last 13 days his whereabouts have been unknown.

Today, persons close to Hunt said they understood he had flown to Europe. They said he had "touched base" in Spain, but they were unable to say whether he still

All five persons arrested in the Watergate raid had ties with Hunt during the Bay of Pigs operation, most notably Bernard L. Barker, a Miami realtor, who was said to have acted as the CIA's finance officer in the invasion preparations.

In an interview with the New York Times last week, Mrs. Clara Barker, Barker's wife, said her husband and Hunt were business partners in recent ventures.

Federal authorities said last month that \$5,300 in \$100 bills found on the raiders at the time of their arrest and in their hotel rooms were part of a withdrawal of \$89,000 made by Barker from a Miami bank in May. This amount was said to have been deposited the previous month in his account in the form of four checks drawn on a Mexican bank.

Mrs. Barker said that her husband and Hunt had been engaged together in business in Central America.

Federal agents reported last week that a walkie-talkie and an unloaded pistol were recently found in the drawer of the desk in the suite of offices Hunt occupied in the White House.

The White House has not said whether Hunt had access to his office there after he ceased to be a part-time White House consultant.

The White House has said that Hunt, who retired from the CIA in 1970, was hired as a part-time consultant in 1971 on the recommendation of Charles W. Colson, special counsel to the President.