

Bugging Demos and Escalating Election



WASHINGTON

The arrest of five men in the Democratic National Committee headquarters last weekend has caused a great deal of consternation in high Republican circles. All leading officials deny they had any knowledge of the incident, which was planned and executed by the same people who gave us the Bay of Pigs.

While most people are mystified as to how it was possible that high Republican figures did not know of the raid, it was easily explained to me by a friend who is very close to the Republican party.

"The decision to raid the Democratic National Committee headquarters in Washington was made as a protective reaction strike. We knew the Democrats were massing a buildup for an attack on the Republicans in July, and it was in our interests to destroy their files before they were used against us."

"But wasn't this raid a violation of the presidential orders not to bug the enemy's telephones unless the Republicans were attacked first?"

"The general in the field who made the decision may have gone beyond the literal intention of the rules, but he believed his actions were justified on the basis of intelligence reports that the Democrats were going to invade Miami."

"But at the time the raid was made, the Democratic party headquarters was considered off limits as a target area," I said. "Surely high Republican officials must have been aware of what was going on."

"As far as the high officials were concerned, they had no knowledge of the raid. In fact, they had given out strict orders that illegal strikes against the Democrats had to be cleared with them. Some-

how communications got fouled up, which can happen during an election year."

"Do you believe a raid of this type, if successful, could have changed the outcome in November?"

"We are fighting a tough, ruthless enemy who will stop at nothing to impose its type of government on the American people," he said. "We cannot sit idly by and allow them to take over the White House."

"Perhaps we didn't play by all the rules of the game, but I can assure you the Democrats are not playing by the rules either. This incident has been blown all out of proportion."

"Had the raid succeeded no one would have said a word. But because it failed, everyone is up in arms. Instead of criticizing the people behind the attack. I think they should be congratulated for putting their party first."

"But," I said, "aren't you escalating the election by bugging the Democrats, and photographing their files?"

"We did not escalate the election. They did. They're the ones who are trying to kick us out. Their leaders have said as much. The President has said many times he would agree to a cease-fire, providing the Democrats give up their political ambitions. But the honor of the Presidency is at stake, and Mr. Nixon has no intention of giving the country away."

"Will the Republicans court-martial the people responsible for the raid on Democratic headquarters?"

"No, but they will be demoted and put on a pension."

"That's tough," I said.

"Perhaps. But their worst punishment is that they will never be allowed to bug for the Republican Party again."