

GOP Asks Wider Bugging Probe

Security Story Questioned

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Law enforcement officials and a key Republican aide, in a series of interviews, have sharply questioned the testimony of high Nixon re-election committee officials in the Watergate bugging trial.

Police, FBI and a Republican National Committee official assigned to GOP security challenged the notion that the re-election committee needed its own \$250,000 spy network to monitor potential antiwar violence against the Republicans last year. One official took issue with the truthfulness of other testimony.

In more than a dozen interviews, several officials

said that if such monitoring took place at all, it was overpriced, unnecessary and provided inaccurate information. If a special intelligence-gathering apparatus was set up by the re-election committee, they said, it squandered money, duplicated efforts of existing agencies and never established liaison with other intelligence organizations or even the Republican National Committee.

Ody J. Fish, national committee sergeant-at-arms and chief of security, described as "untrue" testimony by re-election committee official Jeb Stuart Magruder that the threat of an estimated

See SECURITY, A7, Col. 1.

SECURITY, From A1

250,000 antiwar demonstrators coming to San Diego was the primary reason for shifting the Republican national convention site from there to Miami Beach.

Fish said the 250,000 estimate was unrealistically high, that security was never a crucial problem and the main reason for moving involved construction and leasing problems in San Diego.

Also, he said, Magruder's testimony that \$150,000 was needed to fund intelligence gathering for the convention was unrealistic.

"There wasn't any information they could get that we didn't have," he said in a telephone interview, "and the amount of money we spent on (intelligence), why, hell, you could put it in your ear, it was so small."

Asked for comment on the challenge to Magruder's testimony, re-election committee spokesman DeVan L. Shumway said, "We'll just have to let Magruder's testimony speak for itself. He testified as to the facts."

During the recent Watergate trial, Magruder and other re-election committee officials testified that they made payments to G. Gordon Libby, one of the now convicted Watergate defendants, to spearhead various intelligence operations, including monitoring the antiwar movement.

As deputy campaign director of the re-election committee, Magruder said he

agreed to give Liddy \$100,000 last spring to keep tabs on antiwar demonstrations planned against "surrogate," or stand-in, candidates for President Nixon and another \$150,000 to monitor antiwar preparations for the convention then set for San Diego.

The plans included hiring some 10 college-age informants to masquerade as activists in the Youth International Party (YIP), Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and other radical groups, according to testimony by Herbert Lloyd Porter, the re-election committee's scheduling director.

Although he did not say whether the informers were actually recruited, Porter testified that they were to be paid \$500 a month plus \$500 expenses each per month for 10 months, for a total of \$10,000.

Magruder testified that by early spring last year, San Diego police were estimating 100,000 demonstrators were planning to come to the convention, while "Mr. Liddy indicated to us there would more likely be 250,000 demonstrators."

He said re-election committee planners felt 100,000 protesters would be manageable but "250,000 we did not think we could handle."

Based on that information, he said, "I recommended to (campaign manager John M.) Mitchell and he to the President and the President accepted it, to move the site from San Di-

ego to Miami."

There were other problems, Magruder said, "but that was our primary concern."

Spokesmen for both the FBI and the Secret Service said they never recommended a site change because of security problems.

San Diego Assistant Police Chief Jim Connole, who headed local law enforcement preparations for the convention, said no one in his department predicted 100,000 demonstrators "or any number, for that matter."

"It was too early in the spring to make estimates," he said. "We didn't expect any firm figures until at least July . . . We had not intelligence to rely on."

Demonstration organizers "were talking big numbers," he said, "you know, 100,000, half a million, a million. But we didn't really expect more than 20,000 to 25,000 at the most, but that figure is no more dependable than the demonstrators'."

Connole said his department established formal liaison with Fish and other Republican National Committee security officials but had no such contact with Liddy and the re-election committee.

"If they were around, we didn't know it," he said.

Similarly, police officials in Miami Beach, where the convention was ultimately held in late August, said they knew of no re-election committee intelligence network.

A high FBI official said that both the FBI and the Secret Service maintained liaison with the Republican National Committee, but not with the re-election committee.

The official said the re-election committee's intelligence apparatus, if indeed it had one, was duplicative of existing agencies that were more experienced at intelligence gathering.

All law enforcement organizations involved in convention preparation exchanged information, he said, and convention organizers thus were kept advised of any "pertinent security problems."

"There was no necessity for (a re-election committee intelligence network)," said Fish of the national committee. "It wouldn't make much sense . . . but on the other hand, I've seen the re-election committee do a lot of

strange things."

All law enforcement officials interviewed said it was impossible in early 1972 to make a firm estimate of the



JEB S. MAGRUDER

... testimony challenged

demonstration crowd expected at San Diego in August.

Liddy's 250,000 estimate was "kind of unrealistic," said Fish. ". . . There were too many political and military developments (in the Vietnam war) that could influence the size of the crowd. We had no way of knowing what was going to happen."

Organizers of the mass antiwar demonstrations at the convention say the switch to Miami Beach threw their plans into disarray and effectively cut their numbers.

"Yeah, we would have gotten pretty close to 250,000," says key organizer Ted Howard of the San Diego-Miami Beach Conventions Coalition. "Based on our mail, phone calls, people coming into town, I think 250,000 might have been our maximum number."

As it was, only some 3,000 to 5,000 protesters ultimately showed up in Miami Beach, marching on Convention Hall several times and periodically skirmishing with police. More than 1,000 arrests were made.