

Conspirator's Story

'Cuban' Motive in Watergate Affair

Castro Foe Tells Why He Did It

N.Y. Times Service

Washington

One of the Watergate conspirator testified yesterday that he had broken into the offices of the Democratic National Committee to search for proof of financial support of the party by the Cuban government.

Bernard L. Barker, an American citizen born in Havana who has frequently displayed a passionate dislike of Premier Fidel Castro, told the Senate Watergate committee that his search of the Democratic files had been unsuccessful.

Barker, who said that his role in the Watergate affair had been "to obey orders, not to think," added that he and his "team" had hoped their participation in the break-in would speed the "liberation" of Cuba.

PROBING

Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee, the Republican vice chairman of the committee, was among those who sought to explore the stolid, matter-of-fact explanations of the witness.

The senator asked Barker whether the conspirators had "any reason to believe" that documentation of financial support by the Castro government existed. The witness replied:

"The fact that the Castro government was aiding the

Democratic party had been rumored and had been spoken of freely in Miami from different organizations of personalities that I had confidence in. However, I have no hard evidence at all that this was true."

Barker, a Miami real estate agent at the time of his arrest in the Watergate last June 17, was active in the

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anti-Castro underground in the exile community of Florida.

He said that his "prime motivation" for taking part in the break-in was the belief that he could later get help from a co-conspirator, E. Howard Hunt Jr., and "others in high places" for the overthrow of Castro.

"How did you think you could liberate Cuba by participating in a burglary in Washington, D.C.?" asked Senator Herman E. Talmadge (Dem-Ga.). Barker replied:

"If we helped Mr. Hunt and this government in matters — which I will further add I believe in — it would establish a situation in which, besides the right that the Cuban people have to be free and independent, it would establish us as having aided this government in this mission.

"I view that in the same way where hundreds of Cubans have been helping in Africa, in Vietnam and in other areas of the world, where the people in my particular association are extremely grateful to those sectors of this country who favor our liberation. Hunt represented this to the greatest degree."

Talmadge quickly turned to another line of questioning.

VAGUENESS

Barker's testimony was

studded with seeming non sequiturs and unexplained references but his great admiration for Hunt was persistently expressed.

He said that he had worked directly under Hunt in the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, and that Hunt had recruited him, ten years later, for the burglary of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist and for the Watergate operation.

Barker said that under Hunt's direction he had "surreptitiously entered" the psychiatrist's offices in Beverly Hills, Calif., in September of 1971. Ellsberg had been charged with the theft of the Pentagon papers.

Hunt, Barker said at one point "represents to the Cuban people their liberation." He also said that Hunt, under his Bay of Pigs code name "Eduarde," represented "the anti-Communist symbol" and the "government of the United States in one form — in its covert form."

Barker said that Hunt had explained that the burglary of the psychiatrist's office "was a matter of national security," and that, as other operations came up, "at no time" was he told any different.

Barker told the committee that he "personally was convinced at the time — and I am today, too — that what I did at the time was correct."

Barker insisted that he had not been under pressure to plead guilty and keep silent about the Watergate scandal and that he had never been offered executive clemency in return for his guilty plea.

"... You have a code of ethics in work of this kind that you do not tell anything on anybody?" asked Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., the North

Carolina Democrat who is chairman of the panel.

"That is correct," Barker replied.

LAUGHTER

"And so if Mr. E. Howard Hunt had pressured you into pleading guilty, you could not tell us that under your code of ethics?" Ervin inquired. There was laughter in the hearing room as the senator's line of questioning unfolded.

"This is my decision, not Hunt's," Barker said. The exchange continued:

Ervin — So you did con-

sult with Mr. E. Howard Hunt before you pleaded guilty?

Barker — It was not a consultation.

Q. — Well, it was a discussion?

A. — It was a discussion, certainly.

Barker, who has acted informally as a spokesman for three other men who pleaded guilty in the Watergate Case — Eugenio R. Martinez, Frank A. Sturgis, and Virgilio R. Gonzalez — was then returned to the District of Columbia jail where he and his three friends are awaiting final sentencing.

ALCH

Preceding Barker before the committee was Gerald Alch, the attorney who represented convicted Watergate burglar James McCord at the trial and who on Wednesday accused him of lying. Alch offered to take a lie detector test to support his version of the difference in their stories.

McCord had told the committee that, last December 21, Alch had suggested he use as his defense in the Watergate trial a claim that the Watergate burglary was a CIA operation and that the director of the agency would go along with doctoring McCord's CIA employment record.

"I did not say it," Alch said. "You can't infer words of that nature unless they were said."

The second major difference, Alch said, could be resolved only through a lie detector test because it was a telephone conversation with Bernard Fensterwald, who joined McCord in March and subsequently succeeded Alch as his lawyer.

He quoted Fensterwald as

saying "We're going after the President of the United States."

Alch said, "It was a head-on conversation. I know nobody was listening in on my end and to my knowledge nobody was listening in on the other end."

DENIAL

Outside the hearing room Fensterwald denied making the remark. He told newsmen he and McCord will agree to take lie detector tests, but only if it becomes the policy of the Senate committee to require them from all witnesses.

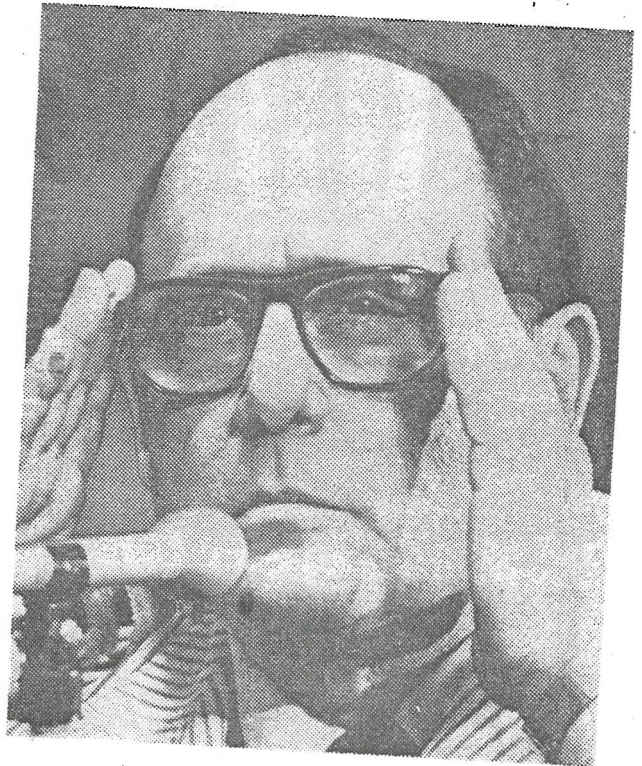
Following Barker on the stand was Alfred C. Baldwin III, an ex - FBI agent who monitored the tapped telephone lines from Democratic headquarters. Baldwin recited the same story he gave at the January trial of how he watched from a Howard Johnson's motel room across the street as police moved in to arrest the spy squad at the Watergate.

Baldwin, who cooperated with the Government and who has not been prosecuted, said he too never questioned the legality of the Watergate operation.

He told the committee his life was shattered by his participation in the bugging and that he is unable to get a job.

The committee, falling behind on its schedule, voted to cut short a Memorial Day recess and add three days of hearings on June 5, 6 and 7. Baldwin will return to testify further then.

RGATE AFFAIR



UPI Telephoto

SENATE WITNESS BERNARD BARKER
A passionate dislike of Fidel Castro