

# Ehrlichman's Defense of Spy Politics

## Washington

John D. Ehrlichman yesterday sternly defended the Nixon campaign's practice of spying on opposition political candidates, saying that politicians have an "affirmative obligation" to investigate and expose the drinking habits and personal morals of other candidates.

Senator Lowell P. Weicker (Rep-Conn.) was at first astonished, then indignant.

"Do you mean to tell me and this committee," he asked, "that you consider private investigators going into sexual habits, drinking habits, domestic problems and personal social activities as a proper subject for investigation during the course of a political campaign?"

"You can go over there in the gallery," Ehrlichman answered, "and watch a member totter onto the floor in a condition of at least partial inebriation."

"I think that it is important for the American people to know," continued the President's former chief domestic adviser, "and, if the only way it can be brought out is through his opponent in a political campaign, then I think that opponent has an affirmative obligation to bring that forward."

Weicker leaned forward in his seat, his 6 foot 6 inch

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frame resting on his elbows, using both hands for emphasis. "Do you really want to bring the political system of the United States, of your campaigns, down to the level of what you are talking about right now?" he asked.

Time and again during the 15-minute exchange, Ehrlichman, a teetotaler, returned to the subject of drinking, without mentioning any names.

At one point he declared:

"Someone with a serious drinking habit is of doubtful fitness for the kind of heavy duty that you bear, for instance, or that any senator bears in the Senate of the United States. That is certainly a material question that has to be raised in a political campaign, at least so it seems to me."

## VIEW

Newspapers have an unwritten rule against exposing the shady side of politicians' personal lives, Ehrlichman asserted, so it is left to the politicians' opponents to keep their constituents informed.

"Obviously, you and I are at loggerheads on a very basic issue here," Weicker responded. "I am quite satisfied that our systems, our institutions, are perfectly capable of passing decent judgments, fair judgments, hard judgments on political figures, public officials without covert operations."

Weicker said that he has run in eight campaigns — two primaries and six races against Democrats. Never,

he said, has he spied on his opponents' private lives, and, so far as he knew, his opponents had not spied on his.

Ehrlichman, a bit testily, declared, "Well, I conceive of it this way, Senator. I know that, in your situation, your life style is undoubtedly impeccable, and there wouldn't be anything of issue like that."

"I'm no angel," the senator remarked.

"I thought you were," Ehrlichman shot back.

"Believe me, I'm not," Weicker said, "and I worry about you seeking people on the landscape here. I've probably got a greater worry now that I've heard about this than before I started."

## AGENT

What brought up the debate was Weicker's question about why Ehrlichman had hired Anthony J. Ulasewicz, the former New York City policeman, who served as an undercover agent for the White House and the Nixon campaign.

Ulasewicz told the committee last week that he was hired to look into politicians' personal lives—their drinking habits and sexual practices especially.

The only specific politician he mentioned was Senator Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.), whom he said he trailed after the senator's accident on Chappaquiddick Island in 1969.

At one point, Kennedy was followed on a trip to Hawaii, but the spies could not turn up dirt, Ulasewicz said.

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