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'Bugging' Embassies— Way of Diplomatic Life

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"The microphones are already there and it is only the foreigner who has to be installed."

Former CIA Director Allen W. Dulles was referring to Moscow hotel rooms when he used those words in his recent book, "The Craft of Intelligence" (Harper & Row), but his prophetic observation, as it turned out last week, might equally have applied to the United States Embassy in the Soviet capital.

When the State Department disclosed last Tuesday that the Russians, for eleven years, have been in a position to listen in on conversations in the American Embassy—through a network of more than 40 microphones imbedded in the building's walls—it was only the latest bit of evidence that "bugging" is a fact of international diplomatic life.

The cold war that began after World War II, combined with the startling developments in electronic eavesdropping in recent years, made it inevitable that the Russians would try to bug the U. S. and vice versa.

While both sides indulge in the practice, the Soviets, as Mr. Dulles has noted, seem to favor the Trojan Horse method. On May 26, 1960, UN Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge displayed the now famous bugged wooden eagle,

which the Russians had presented to the American Embassy in Moscow in 1945. Not until 1952 was the transmitter discovered inside the carved eagle in the great seal of the U.S.

The network of microphones in the wall was presumably installed by the Russians in 1952 when they remodeled the ten-story building on Tschalkowsky St. and turned it over to the U.S., which moved in the following year.

Despite repeated "sweeps" by embassy security personnel, using electronic anti-bugging devices, the wall mikes apparently went undetected until last month, when the security men actually demolished the walls of an entire room. "We had a feeling there was something there," one official told newsmen last week.

Exactly what led to this "feeling" remains a mystery, although there are unconfirmed reports that one or more Soviet defectors may have tipped off the security people to take a look inside the walls. Officials said defectors are normally questioned as a matter of course about any knowledge they may have of electronic penetration efforts directed at Western installations.

Still, officials who briefed reporters on the Moscow mikes did not offer any convincing or detailed explanation of why the walls had not been explored sooner, say ten years ago. "We did



In 1955 Konrad Adenauer, then West German Chancellor, worked and slept in his railroad car rather than in a Moscow hotel, and thus was able to foil cavesitroppers in the Soviet capital.

not have the man power," one official said when the question was asked.

The failure to chop into a wall for eleven years was even more puzzling in the light of one sentence in the State Department announcement: "United States personnel at many posts are instructed always to act on the assumption that listening devices have been in-

stalled in offices and residences."

The possibility exists, of course, that U. S. security experts knew of the wall mikes, and held loud, frequent and misleading conversations for the benefit of listening Soviet intelligence men. On the other hand, a more likely explanation rests with the technical aspects of the Moscow mikes.

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