

*Per 2 J. B. DONOVAN
x Per 2 J. K. JAVITS
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WHAT GOES ON?

On Page 1 of the New York Times of Oct. 5, there appeared the following two paragraphs of a news story:

"Senator Jacob K. Javits (R-N. Y.) is being given secret information by the Central Intelligence Agency about efforts to free more than 1,000 Cubans captured in the abortive invasion attempt of 1961.

"Negotiations with Cuba aimed at freeing the prisoners are being conducted by James B. Donovan, the Brooklyn Democrat who is opposing Mr. Javits for the Senate. He left for Havana on Tuesday to complete the arrangements."

Now it so happens that Javits maintains the Cuban negotiations are not a campaign issue. The Javits campaign staff, however, is saying that Donovan is devoting his entire political effort to the Cuban prisoner release in the belief that this accomplishment could win him more public support than a series of orthodox attacks on his opponent.

The political significance of the CIA briefings provided Mr. Javits are subject to considerably varying interpretations, including these:

The Kennedy Administration is anxious to keep the Cuban situation out of politics, so it is making information available to members of both parties.

The Administration wants Donovan to realize the maximum political advantage from the Cuban effort and is seeking to "tie Senator Javits' hands" by keeping him informed on a secret basis.

John A. McCone, director of the CIA, a Republican, feels that Senator Javits should be kept informed as a matter of fairness.

Secretary of State Rusk, with whom Javits discussed Cuba recently, asked McCone to provide the briefings as a courtesy to the senior senator from Rusk's home State.

These are all Washington theories.

Maybe none is true, but Americans won't derive any comfort from the knowledge that a couple of senatorial campaigners have their feet, fingers or ears in the nation's hottest foreign-policy area of the moment.

One may be pardoned, perhaps, for suggesting that there lingers about this episode an unbecoming aura of mixed values. The Cuban prisoners are the symbol of major tragedy, of the bitterest kind of American error at high level. The prisoner situation is inextricably interwoven with the tense and explosive problem of Communist threat in the Western Hemisphere.

How a couple of New York hustlers scrapping for a job in Washington look upon this problem, or what they are doing in the middle of it anyway, remains more disconcerting than clear.