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CPYRGHT

# Legislator: Got Deferment While Officer of N.S.A.

CPYRGHT By Jerry Szumski

An Iowa state representative said Wednesday he and other top officers of the National Student Association (N.S.A.) received draft deferments in 1960, possibly with the help of then Vice-President Richard Nixon.

Dan Johnston, 28, a Des Moines Democrat, was an N.S.A. vice-president when his draft board in Toledo, Ia., gave him a 2-A "occupational deferment" Oct. 11, 1960.

At the time, he said, he had already graduated from Westmar College and was working full-time at the national headquarters of the N.S.A., largest student organization in the country.

Johnston said in an interview he understood Nixon interceded for draft-eligible N.S.A. officers. As vice-president, Nixon was chairman of the National Security Council, which oversees the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Ramparts magazine has charged that the CIA engineered draft deferments for some N.S.A. leaders as part of a pattern of influence in



RICHARD NIXON

DAN JOHNSTON

the student organization's affairs.

Government spokesmen have denied any CIA involvement in draft deferments.

Johnston said that at the time he knew of no connection between the N.S.A. and CIA. Recent disclosures of financial links between the CIA and various private organizations, including the student organization, have raised cries for a congressional investigation.

### Draft Status

Johnston said the N.S.A. in 1960 was in danger of losing many of its officers — all col-

lege graduates no longer attending classes — to the draft.

"Everybody who was physically able was being drafted if they weren't in college," said the young Iowa lawmaker.

"We had just returned from a national student conference when we were asked who would be eligible for the draft. Our president, Richard Rettig of the University of Washington, then went to Washington, D.C., for the purpose of interceding with Vice-President Nixon to get us deferments.

"I understand that Nixon then wrote letters for us," Johnston added. "I wasn't the only one with the draft problem."

A draft board clerk in Toledo, Mrs. Lucy A. Mounsdon, recalled receiving "a letter from the president of the student organization, but to the best of my knowledge we received no letter from the vice-president (Nixon)."

The 2-A classification covers persons whose employment "is found to be necessary to the maintenance of the national health, safety, or interest," she said.

Mrs. Mounsdon said a letter from Nixon "could have gone through some other channel." She explained that sometimes the National Selective Service makes recommendations to local draft boards.

U.S. officials have acknowledged financing the N.S.A. to send American students abroad to counteract Communist propaganda activities among students.

The N.S.A. reportedly received \$200,000 a year for more than a decade before breaking ties with the CIA.

Johnston was one of the N.S.A. officers who were not "witty" — the code word for those aware of the CIA link.

He was a 21-year-old Westmar graduate when he won election as one of four national vice-presidents of the student organization in 1960. Johnston spent a year traveling to campuses in the West and Midwest.

During one of his travels, Johnston recalled, he learned from a Westmar faculty member that two mysterious men had been in Le Mars interviewing persons who knew Johnston.

Johnston said he may have been under consideration for recruitment into CIA student activities abroad.

It has been disclosed that CIA financed foreign studies for some N.S.A. leaders who gathered information for the spy agency.

Johnston agrees with critics of the CIA connection with the student organization. The disclosures of financial aid, he said, "will destroy the international function" of the group.

The CIA connection, Johnston said, also will "destroy the effectiveness" of young foreigners who came to study in the United States under private auspices.

### "Good Students"

"The Ford Foundation gave money to N.S.A. every year to finance a U.S. education for students from other countries," he said.

"These were very good students, especially from Africa, Asia and Japan, who came here and found out American students were just like any other students. They learned that the American people love peace and hate war and despise colonial tyranny.

"If they say these things in their home countries now, they'll be suspected of being agents of the United States."

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