An 'Enemy Stronghold'?

Democratic Washington Is Very Nervous

By KEVIN P. PHILLIPS

Remember Ted Kennedy & the girl he murdered

Somewhere between the appointment of McGovernite mink millionaire Jean Westwood as Democratic National "Chairbroad" and the execution of poor Tom Eagleton, something profound clawed at the mentality of this city. Democratic lawyers, lobbyists and journalists began combing their little black books for the half-forgotten names of Republicans with whom they could try to simulate long-lost buddyhood.

Out in Omaha, it's easy to say that even six months ago Richard Nixon should have been seen as a heavy favorite for re-election. But in this city, where Democrats have not really been out of power for nearly 40 years, that earlier knowledge was merely mind deep. It lacked something visceral. Only in the last few weeks has the realization of a new era sunk in, and now you can smell it from K Street to McLean, Va. Some acid reflections, then, on the Revolution in Washington:

This is a Democratic city. If you haven't lived here, you can't imagine. Before Franklin D. Roosevelt, it was a sleepy burg with a couple of hundred lawyers, a goodly number of civil servants and not much else. From 1933 to 1969, Democratic administrations and Congresses made it into the capital of the free world, adding layer after layer of high-paid lawyers, consultants, think-tankers, party-givers, journalists and bureaucrats.

Except for the high-echelon government officials of the Nixon Administration, the Washington power elite is still Democratic. Go to any expensive midcity resturant at lunchtime, and three-quarters of the expense account gourmets will be Democrats.

Very few top Democrats moved away in 1968 when the GOP won the White House. They stayed on, in their fashionable Georgetown, Cleveland Park, and Chevy Chase neighborhoods, and made jokes about the ungainly Republican boobs and crewcuts come in from the provinces: Washington under Nixon, they cracked, was "like Paris in 1940."

Over the last two or three years, newspaper society pages and the chic-set articles of *The Washingtonian* magazine have frequently quoted some with-it hostess on the greyness of the Nixon people, on the fact that "they're no fun" and "they don't have parties." More than a few of the cocktail party set have stated baldly: "We haven't bothered with them. We figured that they would just be here their four years and then go home."

The Democrats do have a good time, I guess. An August 1972 article in *The Washingtonian* on "Sex, Power and Politics" painted this fond portrait of the Kennedy era:

"...Recollections of the Secret Service smuggling in high-priced Paris prostitutes in the middle of the afternoon...JFK's several mistresses (one of them worked on Jackie's staff; one of them he visited in Georgetown by climbing in a back window late at night)... assignations in the Lincoln bed interrupted by urgent matters of state... skinny-dipping parties in the White House pool (once a prescient Jackie—supposedly en route to National Airport and New York for the weekend, but either tipped off or sensing something was up—ordered her driver to turn around and go back to the White House, where she found something was indeed up: Jack and a Cabinet member, in the nude, in the White House pool, frolicking with secretaries)...."

Now the Beautiful People are rallying around Sen. George McGovern. In June, Scotty Smith (daughter of F. Scott Fitzgerald) arranged a "Best of Everything for McGovern" gala in which 14 members of the (usually nude) New York cast of *Hair* chanted anti-war themes and gave the Democratic candidate a clenched-fist salute. Small wonder Washington society is bored with Pat and Dick Nixon!

My point is not a very complicated one. It's simply that for most middle and low-echelon Nixon Republicans who came here in 1969, Washington remains an enemy-held city. So the people from Pasadena and Long Island have barbecues in the suburbs and read about limousine liberalism in the "Style" section of the Washington *Post*. There are islands, sure, but the fashionable media, hostesses, law firms and research institutes are still Big D-Democrat. Only now for the first time I can remember, is there a real scent of revolution in the air.

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