

Conservative Youth Meet on '72 Strategy

By David S. Broder
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HOUSTON, Sept. 2—About 1,200 young conservatives, many of them unhappy with the Nixon administration's foreign and domestic policies, gathered here today for a weekend meeting to discuss political strategy for the 1972 election.

The biennial convention of the Young Americans for Freedom, the 67,000-member organization founded 11 years ago by conservative columnist William F. Buckley Jr., is expected to serve as a sounding board for the right wing's complaints against the President's new China policy, his welfare reform plan, his defense cutbacks, and his economic program of deficit spending and wage-price controls.

The organization's leaders, with backing from some Washington officials, are trying to head off a direct repudiation of the President, but they conceded today that he is unlikely to win Saturday night's mock convention to nominate the young conservatives' favorite for the 1972 nomination.

The main contenders in the balloting are expected to be Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, Sen. James L. Buckley, the Conservative of New York, and California GOP Gov. Ronald Reagan. Some of the top YAF officers were lobbying today for Agnew votes as a signal to the administration to keep him on the 1972 ticket.

Buckley addresses the convention Friday and Reagan, who earlier this year repudiated a presidential draft

movement launched by YAF's national chairman, Ronald F. Docksai, will speak to the group by telephone on Sunday.

While most of the YAF leaders and members are Republicans, the convention program also includes Senate Democratic Whip Robert F. Byrd of West Virginia, who is scheduled to speak on "school busing for forced integration" Friday evening.

A spokesman for Byrd, the highest-ranking Democratic official ever to address a YAF convention, said he had accepted the invitation in order "to demonstrate that the Democratic party is broad-based enough to include both liberals and conservatives."

YAF, which calls itself the nation's largest conservative youth organization and claims 800 college high school and community chapters, has provided manpower for many conservative candidate's campaigns. Its executive director, Randall Teague, said today,

"They just won't work for Nixon next year unless they are convinced he's a conservative."

Teague accused the President of "double-dealing" on the Vietnam war issue in a statement last March in which Teague described the Nixon policy as one of "gradual surrender."

He was one of a dozen prominent conservatives—including William Buckley—who signed a statement last month declaring they would "suspend our support of the administration" because of misgivings over its domestic and national security policies.

Teague said today that he expected the statement, which criticized the President particularly for his "overtures to Red China" and his "failure to call public attention to the deteriorated American military position," will be endorsed as a resolution of the convention.

Teague, Docksai and other top officers of YAF were working, however, to avoid a complete breach with the administration in the weekend session.

"We'll let him have it on the issues," Teague said today, "but I hope we don't let him have it in the groin."

The effort to avoid an open break between the conservative youth group and the White House was being backed by former YAF officers who have served in the administration. A former presidential speech writer, Tom Charles Houston, and Agnew's special assistant for political affairs, David Keene, both former YAF chairmen, are here doing missionary work for the administration.

Teague said the Washington officials were urging the conservatives "to push the administration into doing things that would make it easier for them to support Nixon next year," rather than wasting their energies on a dump-Nixon move.

Teague said, however, that some conservatives are disturbed by the attitude they attribute to administration officials that "we have no place to go."

"We're probably not going to have the influence we want unless we have a viable political threat," Teague said, "and I don't see that we have anyone on the right to do what McCloskey is doing in New Hampshire."

Rep. Paul N. (Pete) McCloskey Jr., a liberal California Republican, has launched a campaign against the President in the New Hampshire primary.