

Watergate and Chotiner

By Thomas B. Ross

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WASHINGTON — The McGovern organization has obtained what it believes to be a confidential strategy paper of President Nixon's original campaign manager and is pondering how to exploit it against Nixon.

Although the paper was written in 1955 and its author, Murray Chotiner, is no longer at the top of the Nixon organization, Sen. George McGovern's advisers think the American people would find it revealing as to the President's current political tactics.

McGovern is being urged by at least one adviser to purchase prime television time and link the Chotiner paper to the Watergate bugging incident.

"What do we do when the opposition smears us?" the Chotiner paper asks. "And, of course it is always a smear, naturally, when it is directed at our own candidate..."

"Well, you don't answer anything until you are convinced that the opposition has run its full course and has completely saturated the field on the subject regarding your own candidate..."

"But if you find that the attack has reached such proportions that it can no longer be avoided, answer it; and when you do, do so with an attack of your own against the opposition for having launched it in the first place."

McGovern's advisers allege that Nixon's counter-accusation against Democratic fund-raising practices at his press conference in California late last month

exactly follows Chotiner's advice.

Chotiner acknowledged that he delivered a paper on campaign strategy to a group of Republican state chairmen in 1955 but questioned the authenticity of the McGovern document on several points.

"The fact that they are using a speech made in 1955," Chotiner said, "demonstrates how bankrupt Sen. McGovern and his advisers are for an issue in 1972."

He counterattacked by challenging McGovern to say "who is his spy in 1701 Pennsylvania Ave.," headquarters of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President.

Several newspapers have reported that a member of the Nixon campaign organization has been providing the Democrats with information about the Watergate incident and McGovern, when questioned, has not denied it.

Authenticity

Chotiner, in effect, confirmed the authenticity of the quote about campaign "smears," noting that his 1955 speech was accurately stated in a 1960 book called "Politics U.S.A."

The McGovern version of the "smear" quote was essentially the same as that in the book, but Chotiner insisted that his remark about all smears was made with "tongue in cheek" and was so recognized by his audience.

No Weaknesses

"Never show your weakness at any time," Chotiner said, according to both the McGovern and the book version. "We knew we could not get the leadership of organ-

Echoes

ized labor ... We knew if we simply organized by using the rank and file members of organized labor that it would show up weak in comparison to their committees.

"So what did we do? We just abandoned labor committees as such ... we could reach those voters far more effectively by appealing to them on the things in which they were interested than by appealing to them to unloosen the shackles of their leaders."

3 — He first served as a political adviser to Nixon in his original race for Congress in 1948. Then he was Nixon's state campaign manager in his successful contest for the Senate in 1950 against the incumbent Helen Gahagan Douglas.

Chotiner was national campaign manager for Nixon's vice presidential campaign in 1956, but sat out the 1960 campaign against John F. Kennedy. In 1968 he was

special assistant to John Mitchell, Nixon's principal campaign manager.

Chotiner took sharp issue with the McGovern version of his remarks about the controversial tactics used in defeating Mrs. Douglas in 1950.

Check Record

The McGovern version went as follows:
"Sometimes color has a lot to do with the campaign."

I remember in the Douglas-Nixon campaign, we made a check of the record as to how many times Helen Gahagan Douglas voted the same way as Vito Marcantonio (a onetime left-wing congressman from New York), and we found that she had voted with him — and they were restricted to issues involving the national security of the country, because you

can take any vote and you can find that a man as conservative as Bob Taft voted the same way as Marcantonio for different reasons.

“But we found that she had voted with Marcantonio more than any other member of Congress and I remember we wanted to make up the literature ... We asked to see the samples of stock that the printing com-

pany had and...

“We found a piece of paper that had pinkish tinge to it, and for some reason or other it just seemed to appeal to us for the moment and we printed this record on pink paper. It became known throughout California as the ‘Pink Sheet’ and we had more requests and demands for this literature than any other.”



MURRAY CHOTINER
Questions authenticity

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