

White House Had Agencies

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By Bob Woodward
and Carl Bernstein

Washington Post Staff Writers

Former top White House aides used the Secret Service, FBI, IRS and the departments of Justice, Commerce, Defense and Interior to gather potentially damaging information on Democratic presidential contenders and their staffs, according to 24 classified memos.

The memos, copies of which have been reviewed by The Washington Post, tell of the use of government agencies to investigate Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine), former Democratic chairman Lawrence F. O'Brien, Sen.

L. Kimelman, McGovern's chief fundraiser, and other McGovern staff members.

Classified "confidential" and "eyes only" the memos are dated from January, 1971, to October, 1972, and involve communications between then White House chief of staff, H. R. (Bob) Halde- man, and then presidential counsels John W. Dean III and Charles W. Colson or their assistants.

In general, the memos call for information from government files on political opponents. The memos often suggest leaking the damaging information to the news media or using it in a criminal investigation.

Many of the attempts to leak the information were aborted because, in the words of one memo, "this matter might well shake loose Republican skeletons from the closet" or, in the words of another, the disclosure "might open Pandora's box that we would later regret opening."

Despite numerous allegations that the White House used the government agencies and departments for political investigations, the memos provide concrete detail on the actual practice.

For example, an Aug. 16, 1972, "administrative confidential" memo to Colson from one of his assistants,

Spy on Political Rivals

Steve Karalekas, describes how a Secret Service agent, James C. Bolton Jr., who was assigned to guard McGovern during the 1972 campaign, forwarded information to the White House on at least one of McGovern's meetings.

The memo says that the information was relayed to the White House by Bolton's father, who is the administrative assistant to Rep. Glenn Davis (R-Wis.). The information, which later proved erroneous, was about a week-end visit McGovern had with an alleged subversive in Massachusetts.

The memo continues: "Bolton's son has promised to keep his dad informed

of these and any other kinds of activities, who in turn will communicate the same to" Max L. Friedersdorf, a White House aide for congressional relations.

Bolton senior, the congressional administrative assistant, confirmed yesterday that he passed on the information about McGovern's meeting with the alleged subversive to the White House. "I can't recall passing along anything else," he said.

Bolton junior, the Secret Service agent, could not be reached for comment yesterday. A Secret Service spokesman said last night that the

agency was unaware of Bolton's alleged activity.

"If it is true, it is grounds for disciplinary action," the spokesman said, adding that an immediate investigation would begin. The Secret Service has previously investigated news reports that an unnamed agent guarding McGovern was passing information to the White House, but had turned up no evidence to support the charge.

The report that McGovern met with a subversive was totally inaccurate and untrue, according to a memo addressed to Dean on Oct. 26, 1972.

See MEMOS, A16, Col. 1

MEMOS, From A1

In a June 12, 1972 "eyes only" memo from Colson to former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, Colson urged Mitchell to talk to Mitchell's successor, Richard G. Kleindienst, and suggest an investigation of allegations that some of Kimelman's financial dealings were improper.

"Maybe you can do better talking to Kleindienst than John Dean has thus far been able to do," Colson wrote to Mitchell, who was then President Nixon's campaign manager.

In a memo dated a week earlier, Dean told W. Richard Howard, Colson's assistant, that the allegations against Kimelman first surfaced in September, 1971, when "the information was reviewed by the Department of Justice, and we were advised that there was not sufficient basis to verify such charges."

An undated memo from Robert J. Hitt, executive assistant to Interior Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton classified "very confidential eyes only" tells of two earlier unsuccessful FBI investigations into Kimelman's financial dealings in the Virgin ISLANDS.

(Hitt received \$25,000 in cash from a secret fund kept at the President's reelection committee. He forwarded the money in 1971 to Rep. William O. Mills (R-Md.), who committed suicide earlier this year following disclosure that he received the secret contribution for his campaign for the House seat left vacant when Morton was appointed Republican National Committee chairman. Mills was Morton's administrative assistant when Morton served in the House.)

Colson however kept pushing for an investigation of Kimelman. In a June 27, 1972, "confidential/eyes only" memo from Howard to Dean, Howard said: "As Colson says, there must be something that we can use some place in this government and he wonders if we are still pushing to try to locate this information" on Kimelman.



GEORGE McGOVERN

... war records checked

Howard suggests that Dean check with the Internal Revenue Service, Justice and the Interior Department.

Another Howard memo, dated May 12, 1972, is addressed to a present White House aide, deputy presidential counsel Fred Fielding.

The memo says: "We believe there must be material at Justice and Interior on this sleazy character (Kimelman) that we would like to obtain through your fantastic sources." Yesterday Fielding denied that he ever obtained any government information for political purposes.

Fielding was also addressed another "eyes only/confidential" memo, also dated May 12, 1972, from Howard saying, "We need a check on the South Dakota Wesleyan University, Northwestern University records and the military records of Senator McGovern."



LAWRENCE O'BRIEN

... Hughes link probed

Fielding denied that he obtained information from McGovern's military records until after a news report alleged that the records showed McGovern, a bomber pilot during World War II, had been branded a coward for refusing to fly a mission.

McGovern asked the Defense Department to release his records, which completely refuted the charge of cowardice.

A Dean-to-Haldeman memo a month later (June 16, 1972) described how the White House instructed the Defense Department to release McGovern's war records and simultaneously announce that the file contained a specific number of documents so McGovern could not withhold any unfavorable information.

The Dean memo says that the White House did receive information on the contents of McGovern's war records

and there was only one paragraph that was unflattering to McGovern.

Colson's interest in McGovern's staff extended beyond Kimelman. In a June 16, 1972 memo to Dean, Colson said: "Has anyone run any checks or investigations on the key McGovern staffers? I was told yesterday that Gordon Weil has some very questionable things in his background . . ."

A copy of the memo was addressed to Patrick J. Buchanan, special consultant to the President. Apparently no allegations were found against Weil, who is an economist and the author of McGovern's abortive proposal to provide a guaranteed \$1,000 annual grant to every person in the United States.

Colson also obtained a five-page memo from the Commerce Department on the financial troubles of and a \$13 million government loan given to the Maine Sugar Industry Inc. in Aroostook County, Maine, that was allegedly tied to associates of Sen. Muskie, a presidential candidate in 1972.

The April 16, 1971, memo is addressed to Colson from Thomas M. Thawley, a deputy assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Three days later in an "eyes only" memo to Haldeman, Colson said: "Clark Mollenhoff (bureau chief of the Des Moines Register and a former White House aide) will break this week an exclusive story on the tie-in between Senator Muskie and the about-to-be defunct MAINE sugar beet plant. . . I believe a fair amount of hanky-panky will fall out of this. I have reason to think the issue will be kept alive."

Mollenhoff said yesterday that he did a series of articles on Muskie's relation to the Maine plant. "The story did not come from the White House," Mollenhoff said. "I made inquiries about it before running the series and they must have concluded that a story was coming."

Four memos deal with White House attempts to discredit O'Brien, who was Democratic Party chairman until July, 1972. According to the memos, the

White House obtained information that O'Brien's public relations firm was on an annual retainer to represent the interests of billionaire Howard Hughes.

In a June 28, 1971 confidential memo to Dean, Haldeman wrote: "You and Chuck Colson should get together and come up with a way to leak the appropriate information . . ."

Haldeman said that the information had come from Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo, one of the President's closest friends, and Robert E. Bennett, head of the Robert R. Mullen public relations firm here in Washington.

"We should keep Bob Bennett and Bebe out of it at all costs," Haldeman said in the memo, which is initialed with his "H." Bennett was the boss of E. Howard Hunt Jr., who was a writer for the Mullen firm and later convicted in the June 17, 1972 Watergate break-in.

Former White House secret investigator John J. Caulfield recommended to Dean in a Feb. 1, 1971, memo that the story on the annual retainer fee not be leaked. "Forced embarrassment of O'Brien in this matter might well shake loose Republican skeletons from the closet," Caulfield said. He added:

"In this connection, it should be remembered that Don Nixon (the President's brother) visited the Dominican Republic with a group of wheeler dealers in September 1969 who assertedly were connected with" the Hughes interests.

"Former Rep. Pat Hillings," Caulfield also said, "has long been on the payroll of Hughes in a public relations capacity."

O'Brien said yesterday that he was on a retainer from Hughes and had announced it at a press conference when he opened his public relations office in late 1969.

Another memo describes an allegation that O'Brien was involved in the leasing arrangement of the new Department of Transportation building in

Washington, but in an April 6, 1972, memo, Dean suggested to Colson that the subject be dropped because "raising the issue might open Pandora's box . . ."

O'Brien, who was the target of IRS audits reportedly ordered by the White House, labeled as "pure garbage" the charge that he was involved in a leasing arrangement of the Department of Transportation building.

"Gradually," he said yesterday, "you begin to feel that you're a defendant and the garbage continues to float from the sewer line in the White House to the Potomac River."

In another confidential memo, dated Jan. 5, 1971, Colson proposed to Roy Goodearle, a former aide to Vice President Agnew, that Bennett, president of the Mullen firm, be introduced to the Vice President in order to "enhance" Bennett's influence in Washington.

Colson said in the memo: "Bob (Bennett) is a trusted loyalist and a good friend. We intend to use him on a variety of outside projects. One of Bob's (new) clients is Howard Hughes. I'm sure I need not explain the political implications of having Hughes affairs handled here in Washington by a close friend."

"This move could signal quite a shift in terms of the politics and money that Hughes represents. Bob Bennett tells me that he has never met the Vice President, and that it would enhance his position greatly if we could find an appropriate occasion for him to come in and spend a little time talking with the Vice President.

"The important thing from our standpoint is to enhance Bennett's position with Hughes, because Bennett gives us real access to a source of power that can be valuable, and it's in our interest to build him up."

Bennett said yesterday that Colson set up an interview with the Vice President, but it was later canceled by Agnew. Bennett added that he did no outside projects for the White House.