

The GOP Attacks On the Democrats



Jack Anderson

THE EFFORTS of President Nixon's dirty-tricks crew to disrupt and discredit the Democrats, say investigators, were carefully coordinated inside the White House. The political sabotage had these objectives:

- When Senator Ed Muskie pulled ahead of the President in the polls last year, worried White House aides sought to trip up the popular Maine Democrat. Muskie has complained that he was a victim of a "systematic campaign of sabotage." Some of the dirty tricks, including the forged "Canuck letter" which made it appear he condoned a racial slur, caused him serious political damage and contributed to his poor showing in the presidential primaries.

★ ★ ★

- The political strategists in the White House concluded that George Wallace as a third-party candidate would take votes away from the President, but as a Democratic contender could cause mischief for the Democrats. The White House, therefore, encouraged the Alabama governor to seek the Democratic nomination and worked undercover to help roll up votes for him in the Democratic primaries. In the crucial Florida primary, Senator Henry Jackson contended with Wallace for conservative Democratic votes. Jackson tells us his campaign was hampered by political sabotage, not unlike the dirty tricks played on Muskie.

- The White House strategists considered George McGovern to be the easiest contender for the President to beat. They sought, therefore, to help McGovern win the California primary, which sewed up the Democratic nomination for him. McGovern's chief rival, Hubert Humphrey, told us his campaign in California was often fouled up. But except for a phony press release put out on his letterhead, Humphrey said he had no evidence of political sabotage.

★ ★ ★

- Once McGovern was nominated, the White House objective was to portray McGovern as a radical and to link him with irresponsible elements who favored political violence. A Washington Post source claims White House aide Howard Hunt tried to organize "an attack" by demonstrators in McGovern's name upon the Doral Beach Hotel, which served as President Nixon's convention headquarters at Miami Beach. Subsequent to the conventions, McGovern's campaign has been subjected to harrassment.

Perhaps the most irresponsible of the dirty tricks was a reported attempt to shut off the runway lights on a small field in Northern Florida where Senator Jackson planned to land. The Senator received a report that someone had phoned the airport to cancel arrangements for lighting the runway.