

Nixon Aide Tells '72 GOP Strategy

Washington

Patrick J. Buchanan, a special consultant to President Nixon, acknowledged yesterday that he had urged a White House strategy to undercut Senator Edmund M. Muskie and "elevate" Senator George

McGovern in the 1972 Democratic presidential primaries.

But Buchanan told the Senate Watergate committee that nothing he had proposed in a series of memorandums to the President and six Nixon re-election campaign officials called for "illicit, unethical, improper or unprecedented" activities.

The White House speechwriter and political strategist declared that some of the President's supporters may have committed "errors, mistakes, misjudgments and wrong doing"

Back Page Col. 2

From Page 1

last year, but he strongly asserted that the 1972 election "was not stolen."

BLUNT

Buchanan was blunt — he accused the committee staff a "covert campaign of vilification" to "malign" his reputation — and aggressive in his testimony as his appearance opened the second phase of the Senate Watergate inquiry, an examination of alleged political sabotage in the last election.

"The President of the United States did not achieve the greatest landslide of any minority party candidate in history because of Watergate and dirty tricks — but in spite of them," he said in his opening statement.

He conceded that if it was true that Mr. Nixon's supporters had distributed false campaign literature, making "salacious" charges against Democratic contenders, the action would have been beyond the bounds of acceptable political conduct. He contended, however, that political custom did not rule

out ghost-written ads for "citizens" groups, humorous pranks or, perhaps, even some forms of "clandestine activities."

SWITCH

As the senators turned their attention from the Watergate burglary to the more traditional, if undefined, search for limits on what is fair in American politics, the four Democrats and three Republicans on the panel adopted more traditionally partisan attitudes as well.

Democratic members of the committee challenged Buchanan to explain portions of 34 internal White House and Nixon re-election committee memorandums that suggested strategies to discredit or discourage leading Democrats and to cut off liberally oriented institutions "without a dime" of government money. Republicans on the committee encouraged Buchanan to equate such strategies with those of previous Democratic administrations.

The senators and the committee staff members quarreled about documents being withheld from Buchanan until his appearance yesterday. They disagreed over the admissibility of a copy of Quicksilver Times, an underground newspaper, as evidence of what Senator Edward J. Gurney (Rep-Fla.) contended was a Democratic "dirty trick."

When Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee, the senior Republican, said that the committee would delve into several possible Democratic "errors," Samuel Dash, a Democrat who is the chief counsel said, somewhat peevishly, "I take it they are not presently in the committee files."

Baker leaned back,

twirled his eyeglasses and replied, "I do not believe I will tell you."

MEMOS

Among the memos about which the committee questioned Buchanan were a series, written by him early in 1971, to urge that the President's supporters help eliminate Muskie from contention because, in Buchanan's view, he would have been the strongest opponent.

"Who should we get to poke the sharp stick into his cave to bring Muskie howling forth?" one memo asked. Another described the senator as "Target A as of midsummer for our operation."

A subsequent memo written in April of last year by Buchanan and his political aide, Kenneth Khachigian declared that "what we need now is a decision on whom we want to run against." It urged the election of McGovern, the South Dakota Democrat who ultimately won the nomination, on the theory that he would be the easiest to "inundate."

The memo said "we elevate and assist McGovern in every way conceivable."

EXPLANATION

Buchanan said in reply to questions yesterday, however, that nothing illegal or unethical had been intended by the strategy. He said that what had been contemplated were such traditional techniques as planting unfriendly pickets at Muskie rallies and merely withholding, until the appropriate time, any criticism of Senator McGovern that might diminish his chances of gaining nomination.

Buchanan was asked how far he would go to achieve his political ends.

"What tactics would I be willing to use?" he said, responding to a question by Dash. "Anything that was not immoral, unethical, illegal or unprecedented in previous Democratic campaigns."

After the senators and staff members had explored the rhetoric of a number of the documents obtained through subpoenas of other officials, Buchanan stressed that the language in them often had been standard "exaggerated metaphor"

and he said:

"If I knew I was going to be held accountable (for the rhetoric), I certainly would have written them differently."

CONTENTIONS

Among the most contentious of the documents explored in the hearing was a March 3, 1970, memo from Buchanan to the President in reply to a request for suggestions to "combat the institutionalized power of the Left concentrated in the foundations that support the Democratic party."

Buchanan recommended in the memo the creation of a conservative "MacArthur Foundation," to be supported by financial supporters of the President and which would receive federal contracts for studies that Buchanan complained were then being undertaken by the Ford Foundation and other institutions with a liberal viewpoint.

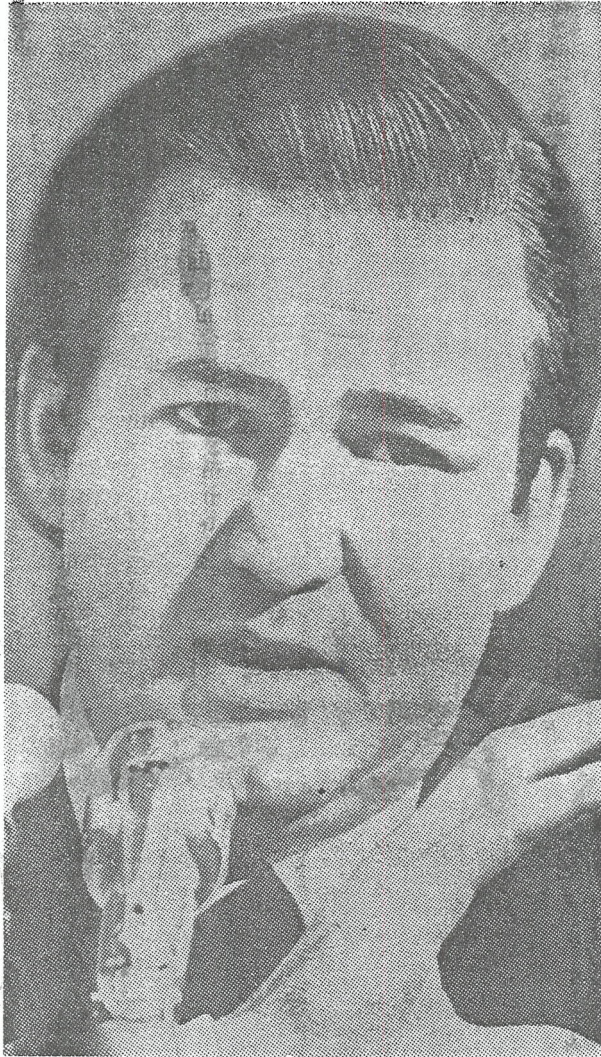
The memo called for shifting government contracts to foundations regarded as friendly to the White House, for a policy that would leave unfavored groups "without a dime" of federal money, and for installation of a "friendly" staff in the section of the Internal Revenue Service that oversees the exempt status of private organizations.

After Buchanan's daylong testimony, the hearings re-

cessed until Tuesday. The panel had tentatively scheduled Khachigian, the Buchanan assistant, as the next witness, but committee officials said late in the day that the witness list would be modified. There was no official word on who the next witness will be.

Associated Press

Memo Man



UPI Telephoto

PRESIDENTIAL AIDE PATRICK BUCHANAN
He was blunt and aggressive yesterday