

Report on Nixon Tactics

Politics and the Elderly

Washington

White House efforts on behalf of President Nixon's re-election included an extensive plan to politicize aid for the elderly, according to a Senate Watergate committee staff rep. ort.

The major effort cited was a plan to finance an organization created by the White House to help attract support from among the elderly.

In the process, White House officials pressured

federal agencies to cut the funds of two long-time advocate agencies for the elderly — groups considered "enemies" of the President, according to the report.

Nearly 20 pages of the more than 150-page draft report were devoted to detailing these aims. The report has not been made public, but a copy was leaked to the New York Times.

The report described what the staff called a "civil and criminal conspiracy" to divert funds appropriated by Congress for social and economic programs for special groups, such as minorities, the poor, the elderly and veterans to a political use.

The report said that the plan also included the use of certain administration officials and supporters, such as then Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson and Arthur S. Flemming, now the chairman of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, in television commercials, and the printing of brochures aimed at the aged, all at public expense.

Further, documents quoted in the report indicated that \$263,000 was spent on various brochures and publications, ostensibly depicting what the President had done for the elderly, but which were clearly political in nature, the staff said.

On the other hand, a television commercial with Richardson and Flemming as participants was not used because of its poor quality.

"The evidence the committee has gathered indicates that federal resources were employed to secure the support of older Americans," the report stated.

"Various documents obtained by the select committee also indicate that government brochures were prepared for political purposes."

Regarding the Federation of Experienced Americans, the report said that the Office of Economic Opportunity was ordered to provide

\$400,000 to finance the federation, "which was created on March 29, 1972, on White House initiative."

The federation was awarded a contract of \$1.5 million by the Labor Department three months after the organization was set up, purportedly to train and provide work for 350 poor elderly, the report said. The OEO grant, of \$399,839, was made later in the year, ostensibly for the federation to deal with problems of the Spanish-speaking elderly poor.

The report quoted an audit by the General Accounting Office that said the two grants "were processed outside normal procedures" and with "substantial White House backing."

In addition, the report said that the White House wanted to cut back and eventually terminate federal funding of the National Council on Aging and the National Council of Senior Citizens. The funds of the two groups, considered "enemies" of the White House, "were not ended but were reduced substantially," the report stated.

Listed in the report as participating in the plan to politicize programs for the elderly were Daniel Todd, director of the Older American Voter Group of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President; Desmond Barker and L. J. Evans, White House aides, and Frederic V. Malek, now the deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget.

All of the men have denied repeatedly that they were involved in a plan to politicize the programs.

New York Times