

Nixon Fund Used to Laud War Tactics

4/25/73

By Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein

Washington Post Staff Writers

President Nixon's re-election committee conducted a campaign last May to give a distorted view of the American public's response to the mining of Haiphong harbor, it has been learned.

The campaign included paying for telegrams to be sent to the White House and the placing of a deceptive, apparently illegal, \$4,400 ad in the New York Times on May 17.

On May 10, White House Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said that telegrams, letters and telephone calls were running 5 or 6 to 1 in support of the President's action and cited them as an indication of "substantial support" of the mining in Congress and among voters.

One former Nixon campaign official said yesterday that the Committee for the Re-election of the President was "totally mobilized for the biggest piece of deception—we never do anything honestly. Imagine, the President sending himself telegrams, patting himself on the back."

Another former Nixon campaign official told a reporter yesterday that the Haiphong mining campaign "put the entire staff in overdrive for two weeks . . . the work included petition drives, organizing rallies, bringing people in buses to Washington, organizing calls to the White House, getting voters to call their congressmen."

"We felt the Haiphong decision could make or break the President," the official said.

Apparently among the participants in the drive were at least two of the Watergate conspirators, Frank Sturgis and Bernard Barker. The two men, according to sources in Miami, showed up uninvited at a Cuban exile meeting in May and attempted to take over plans for organizing a demonstration there in support of the mining. Sturgis later told a Washington Post reporter that he drove the lead truck in a convoy that participated in the demonstration.

At least \$8,400 in cash campaign funds, mostly in \$100 bills, was spent on the drive, The Washington Post has learned. This expenditure has not been reported to the

General Accounting Office as required by law.

Government sources said yesterday that the GAO is expected to release a report this week citing the re-election committee's failure to disclose these expenses as an apparent violation of the law. (The GAO, the investigative arm of Congress, forwards its findings to the Justice Department where a decision on whether to prosecute is made.)

The expenditures were authorized by Jeb Stuart Magruder, who was deputy Nixon campaign manager under John N. Mitchell at the time, according to government sources. Magruder reportedly has told prosecutors that he, along with former Attorney General Mitchell and presidential counsel John W. Dean III, had approved the bugging of the Democrats' Watergate headquarters.

Last October, The Washington Post reported that the Watergate bugging was only one incident in a campaign of political sabotage and undercover activities conceived in the White House that included the placement of deceptive and misleading advertisements and bogus political mailings.

See WATERGATE, A8, Col. 1

THE PEOPLE

VS.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

The May 10th *New York Times* editorial, critical of President Nixon's closing of North Vietnam land and sea supply routes, argued that the President's actions ran "counter to the will and conscience of a large segment of the American people."

—The well-known Harris poll questioned 1400 voters on May 12. 59% approved the mining of Haiphong while only 24% disapproved.

—Finally, the American Broadcasting Company's poll of May 11. Again. 59% backed the mining, and 28% did not.

**WHO CAN YOU BELIEVE—
THE NEW YORK TIMES OR
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE?**

Ms. Patricia O'Leary, Coordinator
Scenic Drive
Croton-on-Hudson, New York
914-271-3175

A portion of the advertisement placed in The New York Times for May 17, 1972.

WATERGATE, From A1

The ad in the New York Times, entitled "The People vs. The New York Times," criticized a Times' editorial opposing the mining. The ad was signed by 10 people and gave the appearance of representing citizens support of the President's controversial decision.

Phillip Joanou, the former executive vice president of the November Group, which handled the Nixon committee's advertising, said yesterday that the ad was paid for with 44 \$100 bills sent from the Nixon committee in Washington.

The Times' editorial had termed the President's action in mining the harbors as "counter to the will and conscience of a large segment of the American people." The advertisement, covering nearly half a page, cited polls showing that anywhere from 59 to 76 per cent of the people supported the President.

"Who can you believe—The New York Times or the American people?" the advertisement asked.

Joanou said yesterday that the November Group, which was set up exclusively to handle Nixon advertising, spent more than \$6 million for ads during the 1972 presidential campaign.

"But The New York Times ad is the only one I can recall in which we made it look like a citizens' effort," Joanou said.

Asked for comment yesterday, DeVan L. Shumway, a spokesman for the Nixon committee said: "There was a campaign to organize support, not to deceive. From what I knew it was a legitimate effort, and the polls show that a majority of the people supported the President."

On Jan. 29, 1973, at the Watergate trial, Robert C. Odle, the administrative officer of the Nixon re-election committee, testified that the committee had undertaken to promote public support for the Haiphong mining decision. He was not asked fol-

low-up questions on how details of the drive was conducted.

The cash fund that financed the Haiphong campaign also supplied approximately \$750 that was paid to Theodore Brill, the head of the Republican organization at George Washington University. Brill received the money to disrupt and spy on antiwar demonstrators camping in front of the White House last year, according to reliable sources.

This fund consisted of about \$13,000, the sources said, and about \$3,300 of it was given to convicted Watergate conspirator G. Gordon Liddy for other espionage activities.

President Nixon's May 8, 1972, order to mine the entrance to North Vietnam's harbors was regarded at the time as the riskiest international action he ever took in the Vietnamese war. It was a direct challenge to Soviet shipping on which North Vietnam was heavily dependent for its war supplies. The U.S. action came at an extremely sensitive point in American-Soviet relations, just two weeks before President Nixon's scheduled summit conference in Moscow.

After several days of high international suspense, the Soviet Union decided to swallow the affront and to proceed with the summit meeting. President Nixon subsequently publicly ridiculed those who expressed doubt that his mining gamble would succeed. During the Johnson administration, U.S. military leaders repeatedly proposed a similar mining order, only to be rebuffed on grounds that the international consequences posed too great a risk.

President Nixon and his present White House chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, were both officially cited by a California court in 1964 for having personally approved a similarly deceptive—and illegal—campaign tactic in Mr. Nixon's 1962 campaign for governor there.

In that case, a dummy committee purporting to

represent California Democrats mailed literature to Democratic voters that included attacks on Mr. Nixon's opponent, incumbent Gov. Pat Brown. Although the mailing said, "This is not a plea for any candidate," a San Francisco County Superior Court Judge ruled that its "paramount purpose . . . was to obtain from registered Democrats votes and money for the campaign of Richard M. Nixon."

The court held that "Mr. Nixon and Mr. Haldeman approved the plan and project . . . and agreed that the Nixon campaign committee would finance the project."

During the 1970 mid-term elections, the White House was responsible for another deceptive advertising campaign, this one aimed at Democratic senatorial candidates who were attacked in newspaper advertisements supposedly placed by an independent citizens committee.

The advertisements, repudiated by many of the Republican candidates they were intended to aid, were conceived by then presidential special counsel Charles W. Colson, who organized the "citizens committee" that placed them.