

9-27-73
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Buchanan: 'I Did Not Recom

Following is the opening statement of White House aide Patrick J. Buchanan to the Senate select Watergate committee yesterday:

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for a variety of reasons I appreciate the opportunity to appear before your select committee but in candor, I cannot speak with the same enthusiasm for the manner in which the invitation was delivered. At the President's personal directive, his White House staff has been called upon and has cooperated, I believe fully, with the committee. Specifically, this witness has certainly done so.

Nevertheless, the surprise announcement that I was to be called as a public witness before these hearings was made over national television before even the elementary courtesy of a telephone call of notification had been extended.

Of greater concern to me, however, has been an apparent campaign orchestrated from within the committee staff to malign my reputation in the public press prior to my appearance. In the hours immediately following my well-publicized invitation there appeared in the Washington Post, the New York Times, the Baltimore Sun, the Chicago Tribune and on the national networks separate stories all attributed to Committee sources alleging that I was the architect of a campaign of political espionage or dirty tricks.

According to the Post, committee sources were in

possession of my memoranda recommending "infiltrating the opposition."

In the Times the charge was that the committee had a series of Buchanan memoranda suggesting "political espionage and sabotage against Edwin S. Muskie of Maine and other candidates for the presidential nomination."

One wire service stated that Mr. Buchanan would be questioned about "blueprints and plans concerning the scandal."

In the Chicago Tribune, the headline read "Nixon Speech Writer Blamed for Muskie Plot." The story read, and I quote: "Senate investigators have evidence that Patrick J. Buchanan, one of President Nixon's favorite speechwriters, was the secret author of a political sabotage scheme."

In the Baltimore Sun under a major front page headline reading "Buchanan Linked to 1972 Dirty Tricks," the story ran thus:

"Patrick J. Buchanan, a presidential consultant, may emerge as yet another architect of the 1972 White House dirty tricks strategy, according to congressional sources."

Mr. Chairman, this covert campaign of vilification carried on by staff members of your Committee is in direct violation of Rule 40 of the rules of procedure for the select committee.

That rule strictly prohibits staff members from leaking substantive materials. Repeatedly I have asked of (committee chief counsel Samuel) Dash and (assistant

chief counsel Terry) Lenzner information that they might have to justify such allegations. Repeatedly they have denied to me that they have such documents. When I asked Mr. Lenzner who on the committee staff was responsible he responded, "Mr. Buchanan, you ought to know that you cannot believe everything you read in the newspapers." It was his jokes and my reputation.

So it seems fair to me to ask how can this select committee set itself up as the ultimate arbiter of American political ethics if it cannot even control the character assassination in its own ranks.

For the record, Mr. Chairman, let me state the following.

I did not recommend or authorize nor was I aware of any ongoing campaign of political sabotage against Senator Muskie or any other Democratic candidate. I did not recommend either verbally or in memoranda that the Re-Election Committee infiltrate the campaigns of our opposition. I have never met nor spoken with nor can I recall every having heard the names of Messrs. Hunt, Liddy, McCord, Ulasewicz, Reagan, Barker or Segretti, until those names appeared in the public press.

Nor have I ever heard until the terms were made public the code names of Ruby 1, Ruby 2, Crystal, Sedan Chair and Sedan Chair 2 or Fat Jack. Even today I could not testify with certitude as to whom these terms refer.

Now, let me move quickly to the heart of the public allegations, against me—but more generally against our presidential campaign.

It is being argued that illicit Republican strategy and tactics were responsible for the defeat of the strongest Democratic candidate for President—and for the nomination of the weakest.

It has been contended publicly that the Democrats were denied—by our campaign and strategy—a legitimate choice at their own convention.

It is being alleged that the campaign of 1972 was not only a rigged campaign but an utter fraud "a political coup by the President of the United States." These contentions, Mr. Chairman, are altogether untrue.

Republicans were not responsible for the downfall of Senator Muskie. Republicans were not responsible for the nomination of Senator McGovern.

To suggest that is first of all to do a grievous injustice both to Senator McGovern and his campaign organization.

Senator McGovern was nominated because his men wrote the rule book, his men were in the field earliest and worked hardest; his campaign was precisely targeted on the primaries they could win, and because he was possessed of the best political organization the Democratic Party has seen in at least a dozen years.

It was not Donald Segretti who put together the organization that carried for Sena-

mend or Authorize Sabotage'

for McGovern the crucial Wisconsin primary.

It was not any agent of the Committee to Re-elect the President who was out winning McGovern delegates in states like Georgia, Virginia and Louisiana.

It was not our personnel, but theirs, who worked out Senator McGovern's victorious campaign and convention strategies.

The McGovern people won their own nomination—and they lost their own election.

As Theodore H. White has written in his latest and best campaign history:

All of the dirty tricks of 1972, added together in the ultimate balance, had "the weight of a feather."

Now, one of the suggestions that I recommended that Republicans, in the spring and summer of 1971, concentrate their political resources upon Senator Muskie—rather than dissipate them on the dozen other potential aspirants for the nomination.

That statement is essentially true.

Senator Muskie was targeting his political attacks upon the President—as was every single one of the other potential nominees.

No requirement exists in ethics—or logic—or law—that we provide equal time in political response to each of our potential opponents.

The reasons for recommending the focus upon Senator Muskie were basic:

He was the front-runner. Alone among the Democrats he led the President in the national polls. He appeared

to me to be both the strongest candidate, and the candidate with the greatest opportunity of uniting the warring wings of the Democratic Party.

Candidly, it was my hope, if not my expectation, that our political counter-attacks, concentrated primarily, but not exclusively, upon the Democratic front-runner, might contribute to opening up the Democratic primaries and preventing a closed convention.

There was nothing—and is nothing—in my judgment, illicit or unethical or improper or unprecedented in recommending or adopting such a political strategy.

The resources which we recommended for employment in that summer and fall, all of them legitimate, were basically these:

National Committee speakers and publications including Monday.

Republican Chairmen and organizations in States Senator Muskie visited.

The Committee to Re-Elect—its media resources, and its developing state organizations.

Surrogate speakers from the national administration including the Vice President and Cabinet.

Congressmen and Senators from the Republican Party who would use the forum of the White House or Capitol Hill either to defend the President against Senator Muskie's allegations—or to put Senator Muskie himself on the defensive.

Also, use of the media, through briefings and con-

versations and the like by political operatives, to carry the message.

There is no Republican individual or organization, Mr. Chairman, to credit or blame for the decline in the candidacy of Senator Muskie.

The narrowness of his victory in the New Hampshire Primary was a reflection of his declining standing in the national polls.

The enormous margin his defeat in Florida was a consequence of the unanticipated appeal of the candidacy of George Wallace.

His defeat in Wisconsin came at the hands of one man, Governor Wallace, who had been there but a single day and another man, Senator McGovern, who had organized the state for 18 months.

As for the general election, Mr. Chairman, the President of the United States did not achieve the greatest landslide of any minority party candidate in his tory because of Watergate and dirty tricks—but in spite of them.

Watergate was the most deleterious issue in our national campaign. In our own estimation, and that of political analysts, the Watergate tragedy cost the Republican Party millions of votes.

The reasons for the landslide of 1972 are chronicled elsewhere; they need not be repeated here at length. Basically they are these:

The President read the mood of the nation better than his opponent.

The President had conducted an administration, for four years, that had won the confidence or support of millions of Democrats.

The President's stand upon the issues of defense and welfare, upon taxes and government, upon coercive integration and busing, were closer to what the American people wanted than those of his opponent.

But we won as well, Mr. Chairman, because of the quality and character of our candidates.

If one looks back over the political history of this country, there is only one other man, other than Richard Nixon, who has been his party's nominee for President or Vice President five times. That is Franklin Roosevelt.

No other individual in our political history has served in both of the same high offices for so long a period of time as has the incumbent President.

He is not the leader of a majority party.

He has been—since 1946—a member of the minority party in American politics.

And thus, this political career, I believe, is all the more impressive.

That political record, Mr. Chairman, is no accident. It is no fluke, and that election of 1972 was not stolen.

And the mandate that the American people gave to this president and his administration cannot and will not be frustrated or repealed or overthrown as a consequence of the incumbent tragedy.