

Colson Admits Authorizing

By Susanna McBee

Washington Post Staff Writer

Charles W. Colson, former White House special counsel, admitted yesterday that he authorized a 1971 probe into the private life of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.).

"When someone comes to you and offers information about a prospective opponent, if you turn him down, you are very naive or you don't stay in politics very long," Colson told reporters after testifying five hours before a House Armed Services subcommittee.

He confirmed what the subcommittee heard Thursday from convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr., who said that, with Colson's approval, he interviewed Clifton DeMotte, a General Services Adminis-

tration employee in Rhode Island, to see if he knew anything scandalous about the senator.

Hunt told the House investigators he used Central Intelligence Agency equipment, including a disguise and phony identification, for the interview with DeMotte, who in 1960 was public relations director of the Yachtsman Motor Inn, which John F. Kennedy used as a presidential campaign headquarters.

His probe, which dealt with the senator's 1969 Chappaquiddick auto accident in which a passenger, Mary Jo Kopechne, was killed, did not yield worthwhile information, Hunt testified.

Colson denied yesterday that he knew Hunt was us-

ing CIA equipment in the probe.

The subcommittee, headed by Rep. Lucien N. Nedzi (D-Mich.), is looking into CIA involvement in domestic affairs, particularly Watergate-related activities. The 1947 National Security Act, which created the agency, was designed to keep it from performing domestic operations.

So far the closed hearings have revealed that CIA equipment, which Hunt obtained in July, 1971, was used in four incidents—the Kennedy investigation; a September, 1971, break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist; a Hunt interview with Dita Beard, a lobbyist for the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. in 1972; and the June 17, 1972, burglary of

the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate.

These projects were undertaken by the "plumbers," a White House team including Hunt that was set up in 1971 supposedly to stop security leaks.

Nedzi stressed yesterday that his subcommittee has no evidence that the CIA knew that the material it gave Hunt would be used in such clandestine domestic activities.

The congressman said Colson's testimony seemed to confirm the account it received from Gen. Robert H. Cushman, the Marine commandant who in 1971 was deputy CIA director, of how Hunt came to the agency that year to get the equipment.

Cushman has testified

Probe of Kennedy's Life

that he approved CIA aid for Hunt after receiving a phone call on July 7, 1971, from former White House adviser John D. Ehrlichman. Ehrlichman, however, has said he cannot recall phoning Cushman that day.

Colson said yesterday he asked Ehrlichman about getting CIA assistance for Hunt and that Ehrlichman told him later that he had contacted the CIA on Hunt's behalf, Nedzi reported.

Hunt's reason at that point for seeking CIA aid, Nedzi said, was that he wanted an interview with Col. Lucien E. Conein, a former agency operative in South Vietnam, about Ellsberg, who had leaked to the press the Pentagon Papers dealing with U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia.

Nedzi reported that in other testimony Colson:

- Denied Hunt's assertion that he ordered Hunt to check out the Milwaukee apartment of Arthur H. Bremer after Bremer shot and paralyzed Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace during a presidential campaign rally in May, 1972.

- Colson said he contacted the FBI immediately on orders of the President and asked agents to secure the Bremer apartment; so it would have been "unnecessary if not preposterous" to ask Hunt to go there.

- Denied trying to persuade any of the Watergate conspirators to seek to blame the CIA for the bugging and break-in at the Democratic headquarters.

- Denied again Hunt's charge that he told Hunt to fake two State Department cables linking the Kennedy administration with the as-

sassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963.

Colson testified Hunt told him about the phony cables after showing them to a Life magazine reporter and added that he ordered Hunt not to release them to anyone.

Appearing briefly with Nedzi after the hearing, Colson, wearing a navy pin-stripe suit with an American flag pin in his lapel, told reporters neither he nor the late George Bell, one of his assistants at the White House, drew up a high-priority list of 20 "enemies" of Mr. Nixon, who were to be targets of federal investigation or other action.

He said the list included "defamatory remarks" about the 20 and added, "That was not my language or Bell's language." He also said he

resents the allegation by former White House counsel John W. Dean III that he and Bell drafted the list, and hopes Dean "will tell the truth."

Colson denied charges by Sen. Lowell P. Weicker (R-Conn.), a member of the Senate Watergate investigating committee, that he was trying to smear him by planting stories that the senator had improperly handled contributions to his 1970 election campaign.

And, in the long string of denials, he rejected allegations that President Nixon had talked to him about executive clemency for the Watergate conspirators or that he, Colson, had recommended approval of a million-dollar plan by G. Gordon Liddy, one of the conspirators, for espionage and surveillance.