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White House Propaganda On Legislation Charged

Washington

The General Accounting Office says the White House staff broke the law in assembling a "Battle of the Budget" kit as a speech-making guide for top federal officials.

"It is clear that the kit is part of an effort to defeat the 15 pieces of legislation pending in Congress which the Administration opposes," Comptroller General Elmer B. Staats said in a report to Senators Edmund S. Muskie (Dem-Maine) and Hubert H. Humphrey (Dem-Minn.)

VIOLATION

Thus, he said, its assem-

bly at government expense violates a provision in last year's Treasury-Post Office appropriation bill, barring use of any funds "for publicity or propaganda purpose designed to support or defeat legislation pending before Congress."

Staats said it is not within GAO jurisdiction to determine whether a 1913 criminal statute prohibiting lobbying with appropriated monies also was violated. He referred this question to the Justice Department.

Muskie and Humphrey, who requested the GAO report, said they have asked

that the attorney general "take appropriate action."

'OUTRAGEOUS'

"We find it outrageous that the Administration has to resort to illegal propaganda campaigns to try to discredit the Congress," they said in a joint statement.

Staats said the material in the "Battle of the Budget" kit was prepared largely during normal preparation of the 1974 budget and its assembly involved principally the cost of paper and printing and the time of personnel.

Associated Press