

Watergate Witness-- New Name

Washington

The Senate Watergate committee decided yesterday to call Patrick J. Buchanan, a White House speech writer and political strategist, as one of its first witnesses when public hearings begin next week.

Buchanan, who holds the title of special consultant to President Nixon, has not been mentioned prominently in the past in connection with the investigation of the Watergate burglary and other related scandals.

But, according to committee officials, the panel has obtained a series of memorandums Buchanan wrote at the outset of the 1972 election campaign that suggested political espionage and sabotage against Senator Edmund S. Muskie and other candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination.

'TONE'

The documents did not specify particular actions to be taken against the Democratic candidates, an investigator said, but rather "set the tone" for various "dirty tricks" that were subsequently performed.

Buchanan, who has worked for Mr. Nixon since 1966, said yesterday that he had written many memorandums that suggested "broad strategy" and "political attacks" against Democratic candidates but had proposed nothing that could be characterized as a "dirty trick."

After meeting in closed session, the committee announced that Buchanan

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would probably be the fourth witness after public hearings begin on Monday.

OTHERS

He is to be preceded by E. Howard Hunt Jr., who has admitted roles in the Watergate burglary and the break-in at the office of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's former psychiatrist; John J. Caulfield, who is alleged to have conducted a spying operation for the Nixon campaign, and John Ragan, who has admitted to investigators that he placed a wiretap on the telephone of newspaper columnist Joseph Kraft.

Hunt's testimony is expected to deal both with Watergate and with other political espionage and sabotage and is to serve as a transition to other phases of the investigation.

The committee also agreed to interview Charles W. Colson, former special counsel to the President, in a private session today before deciding whether to call him to testify in public.

"The purpose is to find out whether he knows anything he is willing to testify to," Senator Sam J. Erwin Jr. (Dem.-N.C.), the committee chairman, said.

Colson, who was a key political adviser to Mr. Nixon during his first term, was originally scheduled to be

the first witness when the hearings resumed. But, last week, Colson's attorney, David I. Shapiro, reportedly told the committee that Colson was a "target" of a federal grand jury investigation and so would prefer not to testify before the committee.

The committee staff took Shapiro's statement to mean that Colson would assert his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination and refuse to testify. One purpose of today's meeting is to determine if such is the case.

Committee investigators who have interviewed Colson have reported to the senators that Colson has provided them with little significant information.

Committee investigators are said to be far from finished with their exploration into the political sabotage and campaign finance phases of the committee's inquiry.

Staff members said, therefore, that they have no clear picture of how the public hearings would proceed after the first four witnesses. Ervin did say, however, that Donald H. Segretti, who has acknowledged playing tricks on Democratic candidates, would definitely be called to testify.

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