

# Report Brands Watergate A Low in Election Tactics

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WASHINGTON, May 27—The Fair Campaign Practices Committee today called the Watergate affair today the low point in campaign tactics since the committee began monitoring political campaign activities nearly 20 years ago.

In releasing a report on the 1972 campaign the committee said that it "has uncovered no campaign tactics comparable in extent or in potential damage to a free, self-governing society" in its existence.

"The sordid scandal called the Watergate affair is not simply more of the same tactics which have made 'politics' a dirty word," the report of the private, nonpartisan group said. "It is a conscious conspiracy to violate laws, to manipulate voters, and to make a mockery of the democratic system of self-government."

Other developments today in the Watergate affair were the following:

Robert S. Strauss, the Democratic national chairman, said he suspected that "manipulation" of the 1972 campaign by Republicans might have cost Senators Edmund S. Muskie, Hubert H. Humphrey and Henry M. Jackson the Democratic Presidential nomination, but he added that there was not enough evidence yet to be sure of this.

John D. Ehrlichman, former chief domestic adviser to President Nixon, said that there was "no functional relationship" between a special White House unit that sought to plug national security leaks and the men involved in the Watergate break-in.

Senator Stuart Symington, Democrat of Missouri, said he hoped that the Nixon Administration's concern over national

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security would not prevent it from "giving the public all the information they have a right to know" about Watergate and other political espionage.

In Los Angeles, sources close to a 1965 Senate subcommittee investigation of electronic snooping said that Bernard Fensterwald Jr., attorney for James W. McCord Jr., in the Watergate case and Senate counsel in the 1965 inquiry, made false statements during his questioning of a key witness in that investigation. Mr. Fensterwald said he had no clear recollection of the matter. [Details on Page 4.]

In Lincoln, Neb., two state Republican officials acknowledged that a \$10,000 check reportedly sent last June to the Committee for the Re-election of the President by the Nebraska Republican party was never cashed and is still missing. [Details on Page 4.]

The reports by the Fair Campaign Practices Committee disagreed with President Nixon, who has said that the Watergate scandal was "only the latest example of the kind of shady tactics that politicians on all sides have been using more and more in recent years."

Theft, spying, sabotage and supervision are not the tactics of the political professions, the committee said.

While the group accepted a simple unsophisticated form of spying as a traditional part of campaigning, it condemned such unethical and illegal activ-

ities as electronic surveillance, falsification of letters and advertisements, false financial reporting and the weighting of opinion polls.

The committee also reported that complaints by both major parties about unfair campaign practices rose to 80 last year from a past yearly average of 67.

Mr. Strauss took issue with the President's recent statement that the various Watergate investigations might harm the national security.

"I have noticed in the last two or three days and since the President's statement, the cover that he has attempted to wrap himself in of national security," Mr. Strauss said on the National Broadcasting Company's program "Meet the Press."

The Democratic national chairman said that "the question that comes back to my mind is, are we talking about national security or are we talking about Nixon security?"

Asked if he was suggesting that the President was trying to justify at least a partial cover-up of Watergate on the pretext of national security, Mr. Strauss said, "Yes, I am saying that. That is exactly what I am saying."

Mr. Ehrlichman, who resigned as the President's chief domestic adviser on April 30, spoke in an interview on the American Broadcasting Company network.

Describing his reaction to the illegal entry of Democratic national headquarters as one of "curiosity and skepticism," Mr. Ehrlichman said he did not believe that there was "anything worth going after" in the Democrats' Watergate offices.

Mr. Ehrlichman said that he was prepared to testify before the Senate Watergate inquiry. "I'm ready, willing and able. I'll come any time they call me," he added.

Senator Symington, who appeared on the Columbia Broadcasting System's program "Face the Nation," predicted that the Senate inquiry would "show the people the dangers of secrecy, as well as the dangers of trying to blanket everything with the two words — national security."

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