

White House Memos Tell Of 'Using' U.S. Agencies

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Former top White House aides used the Secret Service, FBI, IRS and the Departments of Justice, Commerce, Defense and the Interior to gather potentially damaging information on Democratic presidential contenders and their staffs, according to 24 classified White House memos.

The memos, copies of which have been reviewed by the Washington Post, tell of the use of government agencies to investigate Senator Edmund S. Muskie (Dem-Maine), former Democratic chairman Lawrence F. O'Brien, Senator George S. McGovern (Dem-S.D.), Henry L. Kimelman, McGovern's chief fund-raiser, and other McGovern staff members.

Classified as "confidential" and "eyes only," the

memos are dated from January 1971, to October 1972, and involve communications between then-White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman and then-presidential counsels John W. Dean III and Charles W. Colson or their assistants.

("Eyes only" is a classification used to designate that a memo or document is only for the eyes of the person to whom it is addressed.)

SUGGESTIONS

In general, the memos call for information from government files on political opponents. The memos often suggest leaking the damaging information to the news media or using it in a criminal investigation.

Many of the attempts to leak the information were aborted because, in the words of one memo, "this matter might well shake loose Republican skeletons from the closet."

There have been numer-

ous allegations that the White House used the government agencies and departments for political investigations, but the memos provide concrete detail on the actual practice.

EXAMPLE

For instance, Aug. 16, 1972, "administratively confidential" memo to Colson from one of his assistants, Steve Karalekas, describes how Secret Service agent James C. Bolton Jr., who was assigned to guard McGovern during the 1972 campaign, forwarded information to the White House on at least one of McGovern's meetings.

The information consisted of erroneous data — later proved false — about a weekend visit McGovern had with an alleged subversive in Massachusetts.

In a June 12, 1972, "eyes only" memo from Colson to

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former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, Colson urges Mitchell to talk to Mitchell's successor, Richard G. Kleindienst, and suggest an investigation of allegations that some of Kimelman's financial dealings were improper.

"Maybe you can do better talking to Kleindienst than John Dean has thus far been able to do," Colson wrote to Mitchell, who was then President Nixon's campaign manager.

In a memo dated a week

earlier, Dean told W. Richard Howard, Colson's assistant, that the allegations against Kimelman first surfaced in September 1971, when "the information was reviewed by the Department of Justice, and we were advised that there was not sufficient basis to verify such charges."

CURRENT

Another Howard memo, dated May 12, 1972, is ad-

ressed to a present White House aide, deputy presidential counsel Fred Fielding.

The memo says: "We be-

lieve there must be material at Justice and Interior on this sleazy character (Kimelman) that we would like to obtain through your fantastic sources." Fielding denied yesterday that he ever obtained any government information for political purposes.

Colson's interest in McGovern's staff extended beyond Kimelman. In a June 16, 1972, memo to Dean, Colson said: "Has anyone run any checks or investigations on the key McGovern staffers? I was told yesterday that Gordon Weil (one of McGovern's top aides) has some very questionable things in his background."

A copy of the memo was addressed to Patrick J. Buchanan, special consultant to the President. Apparently no allegations were found against Weil, who is an economist and the author of McGovern's abortive proposal to provide a guaranteed \$1000 annual grant to every person in the United States.

Colson also obtained a five-page memo from the Commerce Department on a \$13 million government loan given to the Maine Sugar Industry Inc. in Aroostook county, Maine, that was allegedly tied to associates of Senator Muskie, a presidential candidate in 1972.

The April 16, 1972, memo is addressed to Colson from Thomas M. Thawley, deputy assistant secretary of commerce.

Four memos deal with White House attempts to discredit O'Brien, who was Democratic party chairman until 1972. According to the memos, the White House obtained information that O'Brien's public relations firm was on an annual retainer to represent the interests of billionaire Howard Hughes.

HALDERMAN

In a June 28, 1971, confidential memo to Dean, Haldeman wrote: "You and Chuck Colson should get together and come up with a way to leak the appropriate information."

Haldeman said that the information had come from Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo, one of the President's closest friends, and Robert F. Bennett, head of the Robert R. Mullen public relations firm in Washington.

"We should keep Bob Bennett and Bebe out of it at all costs," Haldeman said in the memo, which is initialed with his "H." Bennett was the boss of E. Howard Hunt Jr., who was a writer for the Mullen firm and later convicted in the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in.

RECOMMEND

Former White House secret investigator John J. Caulfield recommended to Dean in a Feb. 1, 1971, memo that the story on the annual retainer fee not be leaked. "Forced embarrassment of O'Brien in this matter might well shake loose Republican skeletons from the closet," Caulfield said. He added:

"In this connection, it should be remembered that Don Nixon (the President's brother) visited the Dominican Republic with a group of wheeler-dealers in September 1969 who assertedly were connected with" the Hughes interests.

O'Brien said yesterday that he was on a retainer from Hughes and had announced it at a press conference when he opened his public relations office in late 1969.