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**BUCHANAN SOUGHT
TO BLOCK MUSKIE**

**He Tells Watergate Panel of
'72 Strategy to 'Elevate'
McGovern in Primaries**

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 26—Patrick J. Buchanan, a special consultant to President Nixon, acknowledged today that he had urged a White House strategy to undercut Senator Edmund S. Muskie and "elevate" Senator George McGovern in 1972 Democratic Presidential primaries.

But Mr. Buchanan told the Senate Watergate committee

Portions of the testimony
are on Pages 30 and 31.

that nothing he had proposed in a series of memorandums to the President and Nixon re-election campaign officials called for "illicit, unethical, improper or unprecedented" activities.

The White House speech writer and political strategist conceded that some of the President's supporters may have committed "errors, mistakes, misjudgments and wrongdoing" last year, but he asserted strongly that the 1972 election "was not stolen."

Mr. Buchanan was blunt — he accused the committee staff of a "covert campaign of vilification" to "malign" his reputation—and aggressive in his

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testimony as his appearance opened the second phase of the Senate Watergate inquiry, an examination of alleged political sabotage in the last election.

'Landslide' Recalled

"The President of the United States did not achieve the greatest landslide of any minority party candidate in history because of Watergate and dirty tricks—but in spite of them," he said, leaning forward from the edge of the witness chair.

He conceded if it was true that Mr. Nixon's supporters had distributed false campaign literature making "salacious" charges against Democratic contenders then the actions would have been beyond the bounds of acceptable political conduct. He said, however, that political custom did not rule out ghost-written ads for "citizen" groups, humorous pranks or perhaps even some forms of "clandestine activities."

As the Senators turned their attention from the Watergate break-in to the more traditional, if undefined, search for limits on what is fair in American politics, the four Democrats and three Republicans on the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities adopted more traditionally partisan attitudes as well.

Democratic members of the committee challenged Mr. Buchanan to explain portions of 34 internal White House and Nixon re-election committee memorandums that suggested strategies to discredit or discourage leading Democrats and to cut off liberally oriented institutions "without a dime" of Government money. Republicans on the committee encouraged Mr. Buchanan to equate such strategies with those of previous Democratic administrations.

Quarrels on Committee

The Senators and their staff members quarreled about documents being withheld from Mr. Buchanan until his appearance today. They disagreed over the admissibility of a copy of Quicksilver Times, an underground newspaper, as evidence of what Senator Edward J. Gurney, Republican of Florida, contended was a Democratic "dirty trick."

When Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee, the senior republican, commented this morning that the committee would delve into several possible Democratic "errors," Samuel Dash, a Democrat who is the chief counsel said, somewhat peevishly, "I take it they are not presently in the committee files."

Senator Baker leaned back, twirled his eyeglasses and replied, "I do not believe I will tell you."

Among the memos about which the committee questioned Mr. Buchanan were a series, written by him early in 1971, to urge that the President's supporters help eliminate Senator Muskie from contention because, in Mr. Buchanan's view, he would have been the strongest opponent.

"Who should we get to poke the sharp stick into his cave to bring uskie howling forth?" one memo asked. Another described the Senator as "target as a of mid-summer for our operation."

A subsequent memo, written in April of last year by Mr. Buchanan and his political aide, Kenneth Khachigian, declared that "what we need now is a decision on whom we want to run against." It urged the selection of Senator McGovern, the South Dakota Democrat who ultimately won the nomination, on the theory that he would be the easiest to "inundate."

The memo said that "we should elevate and assist McGovern in every way conceivable."

Strategy Defended

Mr. Buchanan said in reply to questions today, however, that nothing illegal or unethical had been intended by the strategy. He said that what had been contemplated were such traditional techniques as planting unfriendly pickets at Muskie

rallies and merely withholding, until the appropriate time, any criticism of Senator McGovern that might diminish his chances of gaining nomination.

Citing advice from White House lawyers, Mr. Buchanan declined to provide copies of his own memos to the committee. After the Senators and staff members had discussed the rhetoric of a number of the documents obtained through subpoenas of other officials, Mr. Buchanan stressed that the language in them often had been standard "exaggerated metaphor" and he said:

"If I knew I was going to be held accountable [for the rhetoric], I certainly would have written them differently."

Among the most contentious if the documents explored in the hearing was a March 3, 1970, memo from Mr. Buchanan to the President in reply to a request for suggestions to "combat the institutionalized power of the Left concentrated in the foundations that succor the Democratic party."

Mr. Buchanan recommended in the memo the creation of a conservative "MacArthur foundation," to be funded by financial supporters of the President and receive Federal contracts for studies that Mr. Buchanan complained were now being undertaken by the "giant" Ford Foundation and other institutions with a liberal viewpoint.

The memo called for shifting Government contracts to foundations regarded as friendly to the White House, for a policy that would leave unfavored groups "without a dime" of Federal money, and for installation of a "friendly" staff in the Internal Revenue Service section that oversees the exempt status of private organizations.

Mr. Buchanan said in reply to sharp questions posed by Mr. Dash and Senator Herman E. Talmadge, Democrat of Georgia, that a study he had made of the Ford Foundation had led him to believe its influence of political thought created a "distortion" of the political process.

He told the committee that he had sought to win White House approval for an overt campaign to shape public opinion on the issue the Administration believed it had in criticism of the news media by Vice President Agnew. In a colloquy with Senator Gurney, he said that he had personally favored "something analogous to anti-trust action" to split up the Ford Foundation. But Mr. Buchanan said that speeches had not been delivered on the drafts he had prepared on the subject.

Irreverent at Times

The witness, who was occasionally irreverent in his rapid-fire replies to the panel's questions, insisted that he had been unaware of the activities of Donald H. Segretti, the acknowledged leader of a group of re-election committee saboteurs.

Mr. Buchanan said that some of the alleged activities of the Segretti group might fall into the category of "utterly outrageous" techniques.

But he said that it was more difficult to sort out what was appropriate among three other "gradations" of activity against political opponents — "dirty tricks, political hard ball and pranks."

When Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr. of Connecticut, the Republican on the committee who has been least tolerant of White House political attitudes, asked Mr. Buchanan if the Nixon Administration had taken "lawlessness out of blue jeans and put it in blue suits," Mr. Buchanan replied angrily.

He said that the Watergate case and other aspects of the 1972 campaign might have involved improper actions for which individuals would have to answer, but that he saw no "connection to the President of the United States" or to himself.

The committee chairman, Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, complimented Mr. Buchanan at one point for having "given us some instruction in the practicalities of American politics."

At another point, however, Mr. Ervin questioned Mr. Buchanan in a skeptical tone about the proposal to divert "discretionary" funds from unfavored to favored foundations.