

Mathias Attacks 'Southern Strategy'

By Douglas Watson

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sen. Charles McC. Mathias (R-Md.) charged yesterday that President Nixon's "Southern strategy" has been "an unprincipled coalition devoid of a positive program" that has "driven many more Republicans out of the party" than it attracted.

Mathias called for "a renaissance of responsive, responsible government" based on "traditional Republican principles" in a speech prepared for delivery last night to the Ripon Society, a liberal Republican group meeting in Arlington.

"While the Republican Party, and 99.9 per cent of its members may not be responsible for Watergate, the party will be—and should be—harshly held accountable if it does not lead the effort to ensure that such gross abuse of public trust is fully and faithfully investigated and prosecuted and cannot recur," Mathias said.

Mathias said that in its first two years, the Nixon administration proposed a "positive program and political strategy for America's future" known as "the New American Revolution."

"But during the past three years the New American Revolution has been surrendered to

the futile pursuit of a New Majority through the Southern strategy," said Mathias, who is expected to run for reelection next year.

"While the New American Revolution promised a creative evolution of economic and political power, the politics of the New Majority demanded an unprecedented concentration of power in the White House staff," Maryland's senior Republican senator continued.

"The Southern strategy may have reaped some few additional party members in the South but, as the Harris poll reflects, it has driven many more Republicans out of the party in every other part of the country," Mathias said.

The "Southern strategy" generally is considered to be a policy under which the GOP has sought through a weakened effort on civil rights to enhance its political strength in the South by wooing traditionally conservative white Democrats who have supported George C. Wallace.

The "Southern strategy" has assumed that gains in conservative white party members would more than offset departures from the Republican Party by moderates and blacks.

On Friday night Virginia

Gov. Linwood Holton told the Ripon Society that the Republican Party, "as the party of Lincoln, would be desecrating his very name if we tried to turn the Southern branch of our party into an all-white club."

Mathias, who has frequently opposed the White House on issues, said, "Events in recent years and months have given us any number of examples of the . . . ultimate corruption of political power not exercised in accordance with principle."

In urging Republican moderates to reassert themselves "for the good of the nation," Mathias praised "four men who remembered that their first loyalty was to the Constitution."

Mathias said, "John Sirica, Archibald Cox, William Ruckelshaus and Elliot Richardson demonstrated that principled action can make a difference in America."