

Early Memo on Campaign Spying

Washington

The House Judiciary Committee has obtained evidence that, months before the Watergate break-in, White House officials, including H. R. Haldeman, were informed of Republican efforts to spy on Democratic presidential candidates.

The evidence is contained in a series of confidential memorandums written in 1971 and 1972 by Gordon C. Strachan to Haldeman, then the White House chief of staff.

Haldeman has denied under oath having any foreknowledge of covert intelligence-gathering efforts aimed at Democratic candidates.

The first reference to political espionage efforts on behalf of the Committee for the Re-election of the President appears in a "political matters" memorandum from Strachan, Haldeman's White House aide, dated Sept. 18, 1971 in which Strachan noted, almost in passing, that "a plant will be in Muskie headquarters beginning October 1." Other memos detail some of that operation, one reporting that "the Muskie office plant is . . . producing speeches prior to delivery, recipients of Muskie materials in certain states, and films of certain files."

Strachan also displayed some apparent knowledge of the re-election committee's efforts to "sabotage" the primary campaigns of Democratic presidential challengers, referring in the October memo to the success

of "suggestions" by Patrick J. Buchanan, a presidential speech writer, "for causing Muskie difficulties during appearances."

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