



## PROBE, From A1

The federal grand jury here is investigating allegations that Tongsun Park spent between \$500,000 and \$1 million annually on cash, gifts, and campaign contributions for U.S. congressmen and other officials in an effort to "create a favorable legislative climate" for the South Korean government of President Park Chung Hee.

Recently the grand jury has been hearing testimony concerning former Rep. Otto Passman (D-La.) and Edwards, a Louisiana congressman until he was elected governor, and their possible roles in purchases of U.S. rice by South Korea.

Information in the hands of the Justice Department contains allegations that Tongsun Park used commissions he received as the exclusive broker for the multimillion dollar rice deals to generate cash for his congressional influence-peddling schemes.

Also under investigation are allegations that certain congressmen used their powerful positions to get more aid for South Korea.

A source noted that prior to yesterday's grand jury testimony, Vidrine contacted the IRS to change some previous testimony before a grand

jury probing Edward's finances. He also has given a television interview at variance with his testimony yesterday.

According to sources close to Vidrine, Edwards has sought for the past year to get Vidrine to retract his statements about the governor and to attribute them to chronic alcoholism.

Vidrine's testimony before the grand jury yesterday, according to a source, detailed a complicated series of deals and agreements involving rice, warplanes, jobs for relatives and friends, and sweet potatoes. Most of the principals described in the testimony denied Vidrine's version of events.

The grand jury heard Vidrine testify that he traveled with Governor-elect Edwards to Washington on March 22, 1972, to discuss a pending sale of Louisiana rice to Korea and other political matters.

At the time, the rice sale was considered a significant factor in Edwards' political popularity in Louisiana and his role in arranging a major sale of surplus rice to Korea in 1971 through Tongsun Park was credited as the key factor in his election as governor.

Edwards and Vidrine met for lunch

with then Korean Ambassador Kim Dong-Jo, several Korean Embassy aides and Tongsun Park, according to Vidrine's testimony.

Ambassador Kim mentioned at the meeting that the South Korean government desperately needed three more Phantom jet fighter planes (F-4s) to increase its air arsenal against the threat of attack from North Korea, Vidrine testified. Kim then mentioned that Korea would like to buy more Louisiana rice, rather than California rice which the government had been buying due to its preferred standing in South Korea, Vidrine told the grand jury.

Edwards told Kim that he could assure Kim that Korea would get the F-4s, Vidrine testified.

Park then explained that the planes were a condition of the rice purchase, the grand jury was told.

Immediately after the lunch, Vidrine testified that he and Edwards went to the office of Rep. F. Edward Hebert (D-La.), then the powerful chairman of the Armed Services Committee. Edwards asked for Hebert's help in securing the extra planes, according to Vidrine's testimony.

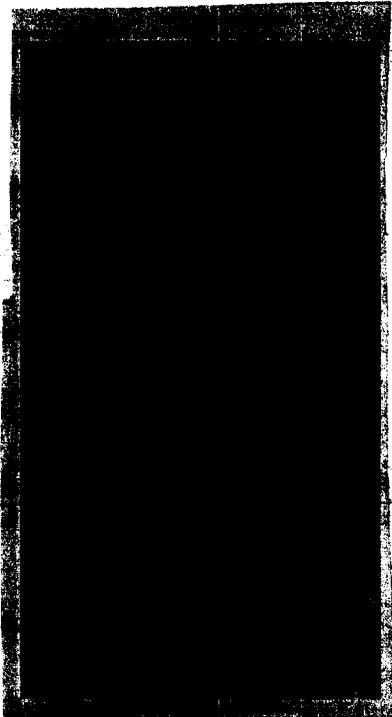
Hebert assured Edwards that he would assist him, the source said, Vidrine testified.

Edwards and Vidrine then went back to Passman's office, where Tongsun Park waited. After explaining that Hebert would assist with the planes, Edwards asked for Passman's assistance in arranging additional credit through the U.S. "Food for Peace" program for the rice purchases, according to Vidrine's testimony.

A sum of \$60 million in credits was agreed upon, Vidrine testified, but Passman insisted on several conditions of his own. He wanted several relatives and friends "taken care of," meaning employed, according to Vidrine's testimony. Edwards instructed Vidrine on the spot to appoint one relative to a position in the governor's office when they assumed office, Vidrine testified. The others were to be employed by a local rice dealer, who stood to profit from the rice sale, according to the testimony.

The second condition was that Korea agree to purchase sweet potatoes, in addition to rice, Vidrine told the grand jury. Passman's congressional district was about to be redrawn and would include a depressed sweet potato growing area, according to Vidrine's testimony.

Park told Passman that it would be



... American ... payment

... no problem ... Vidria's testimony ...

... Resched ... said he did not recall ... He ... government for increased military ... although he acknowledged ... support ... military assistance plans