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Jaworski Accepts Post

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Leon Jaworski, former Watergate special prosecutor, agreed yesterday to return to Washington to take over the internal House investigation of alleged South Korean influence-buying in Congress.

Jaworski, 71, will replace his former Watergate assistant, Philip A. Lacovara, who resigned last week after a dispute with Chairman John J. Flynt Jr. (D-Ga.) over the pace of the inquiry by the Standards of Official Conduct Committee.

Flynt's plan for a dramatic acceptance of the offer—via a 4 p.m. long-distance telephone hookup before a roomful of reporters—was defused somewhat when it took 23 minutes for

the call from Jaworski in Houston to come through.

Flynt, who had been visibly upset earlier in the day because the House leadership announced the impending appointment before he did, said Jaworski will come to Washington in mid-August and will serve without pay.

Flynt's demand for an audit of the \$35,000 bill from Lacovara's law firm for last month precipitated the special counsel's sudden resignation.

Peter A. White, 32, a member of the Jaworski firm's Washington office, will serve as deputy special counsel and will start to work immediately, Flynt said.

Flynt's committee seems sure to quickly approve Jaworski's appointment at a meeting scheduled for today.

It also will consider a "memo of un-

derstanding" that is intended to ensure that Jaworski will have complete independence in carrying out the investigation of members who took cash and gifts from representatives of the South Korean government.

When the committee discussed the matter at a meeting earlier yesterday, however, Flynt insisted that Jaworski could be no more independent than Lacovara was. "No special counsel ever had more independence," Flynt said. But he insisted he could not delegate his authority to call meetings and issue subpoenas.

Flynt's personal criticism of Lacovara led to cries that the special counsel had been forced out, and many junior members of the House raised questions about Congress' willingness to investigate itself.

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KOREANS, From A1

House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill Jr. (D-Mass.) intervened earlier this week, pledging that he would work with Flynt to get a "nationally known" replacement to assure the public that the investigation would be vigorously pursued.

Despite Jaworski's reputation as the special prosecutor who headed the investigation that toppled the Nixon administration, there were expressions of reservations in some quarters.

Rep. Bruce F. Caputo, (R-N.Y.), a maverick freshman on the committee who has often criticized the pace of the investigation, said yesterday that he hoped members would get a chance to ask Jaworski about past lobbying activities and his willingness to press for discipline of important figures.

Noting that Jaworski had declined to recommend President Nixon's indictment, Caputo asked, "Will Mr. Jaworski show the same proclivity to protect political institutions that he showed when he was special prosecutor?"

Consumer advocate Ralph Nader issued a press statement soon after the announcement questioning the appropriateness of Jaworski's new role because the Houston lawyer lobbied for big business against the consumer protection agency bill.

Jaworski's acceptance of the new assignment in the one-sided telephone call with Flynt followed a committee meeting where the members voted down, 9 to 3, a motion that Lacovara's resignation not be accepted.

Rep. Albert H. Quie (R-Minn.) argued that the 34-year-old Lacovara had done an excellent job in selecting the special staff, which is continuing to carry out the day-to-day investigative work. And he argued that picking a new special counsel, no matter how prominent, would delay the inquiry's progress.

Others countered, however, that the committee had no choice but to accept Lacovara's decision and that the Congress "would look weak" to ask him to reconsider.

Only Republicans Caputo and Millie H. Fenwick (N.J.) supported Quie's motion.

Throughout the meeting yesterday, Flynt made it clear that he, the committee chairman, not Jaworski or O'Neill, would retain control of the investigation.

He stressed that he, not the Speaker, had first contacted Jaworski. And after he learned that O'Neill had told the press of Jaworski's impending decision, he angrily demanded that he make the official announcement.

"I would hope that nobody, repeat nobody, would pre-empt my right to make that announcement," he told reporters after the committee meeting broke up about noon.

When the long-delayed phone call

from Jaworski came a few hours later, Flynt, not the leadership, appeared before a gaggle of reporters and television lights.

"This is Jack Flynt," he said when the phone finally rang. "Hello, Mr. Jaworski . . . Fine, thanks . . ."

He also told the new special counsel that "I'm a very easy person to get along with . . ."

At the committee meeting earlier in the day, the members took great pains to praise the work of the special staff of more than a dozen lawyers and investigators and to complain that the media had unfairly portrayed the committee as dragging its feet.

John W. Niels Jr., the top attorney on the special staff, reported that in the less than three weeks since the last progress report, investigators had conducted scores of interviews, issued dozens of subpoenas and analyzed thousands of pages of documents.

He noted, for instance, that 415 of the 435 House members and 218 of 279 former members had responded to a committee questionnaire about acceptance of gifts or cash from the South

Koreans. He said the answers furnished the staff with a "wealth" of information and leads.

Niels criticized as "inaccurate and misleading" a recent New York Times report that said the questionnaire responses show that at least 115 members were "involved" in the Korean scandal.

He said the estimate did not come from any staff compilation. "It's inaccurate, no matter how you slice it," he said.

Niels also said that a list reconstructed from shredded material taken from the office of a key figure in the inquiry "is not a list of wrongdoers," in the staff's opinion.

Copies of the list, which names 108 House and Senate members who supposedly "associated" with Tongsun Park, the South Korean businessman who is the focus of the House inquiry and a separate Justice Department investigation, are in the hands of several reporters. Quie asked yesterday if he could see it, too.

Staff writer T. R. Reid contributed to this article.



By James K.W. Atherton—The Washington Post

Flynt; "No special counsel ever had more independence" than did Lacovara.