

Inquiry Slated on Koreans' Gifts

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The House ethics committee is expected to vote today to begin what senior committee members say will be a vigorous, full-scale investigation of members of Congress who allegedly accepted bribes of cash and gifts from agents of the South Korean government.

The committee is also expected to select Philip A. Lacovara, a top member of the Watergate special prosecution team, to head the inquiry, which the committee's ranking members say is another sign of their intention to conduct a thorough investigation.

Rep. Floyd D. Spence (R-S.C.), the ranking Republican on the ethics committee, said yesterday that he and

committee chairman John J. Flynt (D-Ga.) discussed the job with Lacovara late last week and will recommend his appointment to the other members at a meeting today.

Lacovara, 33, was a top assistant to Watergate special prosecutors Archibald Cox and Leon Jaworski. He helped Jaworski argue the Nixon tapes case before the Supreme Court and resigned in September, 1974, to protest President Ford's pardon of Nixon.

"He's got a reputation of being hard-nosed and independent," Spence said yesterday. "His appointment would help reassure the public that the committee is serious about this investigation. I know the chairman and I am dead serious about it."

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House Panel to Probe Koreans' Gifts

PROBE, From A1

The ethics panel frequently has been criticized in the past for failing to actively pursue allegations of misconduct by House members. The government reform lobby Common Cause has called for a Watergate-type select committee to investigate the Korean influence-buying charges because of what it called a dismal past record by the ethics committee.

The House Democratic caucus voted last week to refer the matter to the ethics committee. Top Republican leaders also have called for a full-scale investigation.

Flynt could not be reached yesterday for comment about the scope of the committee's planned inquiry, but Spence said, "Lacovara told us that if he took the job it would have to be with no holds barred, that he's have to be able to follow the trail wherever it leads."

Lacovara declined comment yesterday, pending a committee announcement.

The Department of Justice has been probing the finances of at least a dozen congressmen who have received gifts and cash from South Koreans such as Washington-based businessman Tongsun Park. The Washington Post has reported that U.S. intelligence reports indicate that the bribery scheme has been directed personally by South Korean President Park Chung Hee.

In a related development, Rep. Donald M. Fraser (D-Minn.) said yesterday that he will ask the House International Relations Committee and the full House to set up a special subcommittee headed by him to investigate "the full range of U.S.-Korea relations."

Fraser's international organization subcommittee has been holding hearings on the activities of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency since last year, but he said a special subcommittee backed by a House resolution was needed to insure adequate staffing and financing and "the full cooperation of the executive branch agencies, including the intelligence community."

He said he did not think the two House investigations would overlap because his inquiry would look at broad foreign policy questions rather

than the specific instances of misconduct pursued by the ethics committee.

A third House panel is considering an investigation that would touch at least peripherally on the activities of the Korean CIA in this country. Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.) said yesterday that his Judiciary subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights is interested in asking how the FBI checks the activities here of foreign intelligence agencies.

"It's pretty clear what the FBI's responsibility is in keeping tabs on Soviets, Chinese and (Communist) bloc agents," he said. "But what about the activities of agents from 'friendly' countries—Korea, Iran, Chile, Taiwan?"

"Obviously we're most concerned about complaints we get from students and other foreign nationals who say they're being harassed and spied on," Edwards added. "What's the FBI doing about their rights?"

Fred Wertheimer, vice president of Common Cause, said yesterday that Lacovara's selection to head the House ethics committee probe would be "a positive step because he's got a terrific reputation. He's the kind of person we would have confidence in."

Wertheimer added that his group was still concerned about how vigor-

ously and how far the ethics panel would pursue the Korean bribery allegations.

He said, for instance, that in the past the committee has claimed it had no jurisdiction over the conduct of former members.

"Yet we've heard about secret business arrangement between former members and Tongsun Park," said Wertheimer. "And this raises serious questions about the need for strict rules to see that doesn't re-occur."

The Washington Post has reported that former Rep. Richard Hanna (D-Cal.), while he served in Congress, was a business partner of Tongsun Park.

Wertheimer also said that any comprehensive investigation should examine the broader question of other nations' efforts to influence American foreign policy. "We'd still prefer a select committee, but if ethics is going ahead on the misconduct charges, Fraser should have the resources to really look at the foreign policy implications," he said.

"This whole Tongsun Park thing raises questions as fundamental as you can get, about foreign governments trying to buy into the Congress. No other investigation could be as important to this country at this time."