

Justice Department investigating Korean ties with U.S. politicians

WASHINGTON (AP) — Korean businessman Tongsun Park boasted in December 1973 that he gave thousands of dollars in campaign contributions to many prominent American politicians, including \$500,000 to then-President Richard M. Nixon, a customs official said Thursday.

Park, a rice broker who is the key figure in a Justice Department investigation of influence-peddling in Congress by Korean agents, was carrying a list with U.S. politicians' names and figures he said represented campaign contributions when he was searched by customs agents in Anchorage, Alaska, on Dec. 8, 1973.

Park made frantic efforts to recover or tear up the list and other papers dealing with rice transactions before inspectors read them, said Donavan Working, former U.S. Customs district director for Anchorage.

Later, a phone call to customs officials

in Washington determined the papers could not be confiscated, Working said.

Park then bragged that the two-and three-digit figures beside each name stood for "thousands of dollars" in contributions, which had "something to do with assistance from these officials with some sort of a rice program that he was involved in," according to Working, now district customs director in Laredo, Texas.

A government source said Thursday that Justice Department investigators have not determined the significance of Park's list, particularly whether it meant Park had made any payments to the officials.

Investigators must still check out the list's meaning, the source said.

Most of the names on the list have not been made public. Working said that in addition to Nixon, he recalled that the names of Sens. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., and Hubert H. Humphrey, D-

Minn., were on the list, along with then Rep. Richard T. Hanna, D-Calif.

A spokesman for Humphrey said Thursday, "There were no contributions to the senator from Park, and he had no connection with Park or the Korean lobby."

An aide to Goldwater said the senator had thoroughly checked his financial records back to 1964, "and none of us can recall any kind of contribution or gift of any kind from Park or anybody connected in any fashion with him."

The aide said that Goldwater is a member of the posh Georgetown Club, a private club here owned by Park, but does not have ties with Park himself.

Park, who also owns an export-import business here, is out of the country, but his lawyers have said he has denied allegations that he made illegal cash payments to any congressmen.

Park reportedly has told federal investigators about contributions he made to several congressmen, including former Reps. Cornelius Gallagher of New Jersey and Hanna of California. Rep. John Brademas, D-Ind., has acknowledged receiving campaign contributions totaling \$4,650 from Park in 1972 and 1974.

The Korean government has denied that Park was acting on its behalf.