

Rep. Podell Is Indicted on

By Stephen Isaacs

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NEW YORK, July 12—Rep. Bertram L. Podell (D-N.Y.) was indicted by a federal grand jury here today on charges of conspiracy, perjury and bribery.

Podell, a four-term congressman who represents New York's 13th District in Brooklyn, immediately branded the 10-count indictment a White House attempt at "political assassination."

In Washington, he said that "I am ready to go to trial today, right now, and I am confident of my ultimate vindication."

"I consider it a badge of honor," Podell said, "to be public enemy No. 1 of the most corrupt administration in the 200-year history of this nation. I have the honor of being the first political assassination on the White House list.

"My indictment and political death is meant to atone for the cesspool of crime and corruption uncovered in the Watergate hearings. I am only the first, not the last, con-

gressman whose career is threatened by ... the White House."

The investigation of Podell was carried out by the same U.S. attorney's staff that in May obtained the indictment of former Cabinet officers John N. Mitchell and Maurice H. Stans, along with former New Jersey Republican leader Harry Sears and fugitive financier Robert L. Vesco.

U.S. Attorney Paul J. Curran said the indictment resulted from a long investigation conducted by his office's anti-corruption unit and by the FBI. He said Podell and two co-defendants would be arraigned July 23.

The indictment charges Podell, 47, and his brother, Herbert S. Podell, and one other man, Martin Miller of Miami, with soliciting and receiving money to influence federal agencies in trying to obtain a regular routing from Florida to the Bahamas for Florida Atlantic Airlines, Inc.

Florida Atlantic failed to receive the routing and is now bankrupt.



REP. BERTRAM PODELL
... sees "assassination"

The indictment accuses Rep. Podell of soliciting more than \$57,000 and receiving \$41,350 in bribes, which were then concealed as legal fees to the

law firm of Podell and Podell, and as a payment to the "Citizen's Committee for the Re-election of Bertram L. Podell."

The conspiracy is alleged to have taken place between March, 1968, and the present.

According to the indictment, the three defendants and two unindicted co-conspirators "would and did agree to defraud the United States of the honest, and unbiased, services of a member of Congress ... and accused Podell of "using his office, prestige and influence as a member of Congress to intercede with the Federal Aviation Agency, Civil Aeronautics Board, the Department of State and the Government of the Bahama Islands for the purpose of obtaining (the routine) by unlawful and fraudulent means."

At the time, Podell was a member of the House Commit-

Bribery Charges

tee on Space and Aeronautics. The indictment alleges that in 1968 Podell went to the Bahamas to try to influence Bahamian officials about the route application.

The indictment also charges both Podells and Miller with lying to the FBI when agents questioned them about the actions and fees a year and a half ago, and repeating the lies before the grand jury here in May.

According to the indictment, Herbert Podell lied to FBI agents when he told them "that his law firm, Podell and Podell, performed no services and did no work" with the route application and that he, not his brother, the congressman, had done the work on the application.

The congressman, says the indictment, lied when he maintained to the agents "that he had received no money or fees" for helping the

airline, that any contacts he had with government agencies "were contacts had because of friendship for a constituent."

Podell represents a district that takes in such historic areas as Coney Island, Flatbush and Brighton Beach. He was first elected to Congress in a special election in 1968 to replace the veteran Abraham J. Multer who had been elected to the New York State Supreme Court, where he now sits.

The specific charges brought in the case involve statutes covering bribery and conflict of interest. The conflict of interest statute makes it illegal for any member of Congress to accept money for services in a proceeding before a federal agency. Any person convicted of either bribery or conflict of interest may not hold any federal position.

The maximum penalties on each of the counts range from two to 15 years in jail.