

Cox's firing now blocking other probes

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WASHINGTON—President Nixon's firing of Archibald Cox blocked, at least temporarily, the search for White House records that could prove vital to non-Watergate investigations including the ITT and milk-price cases.

Dissolution of the special prosecutor's office also leaves an uncertain future for probes into a \$100,000 contribution from billionaire Howard Hughes to Nixon's friend C. G. "Bebe" Rebozo, illegal corporate donations to the President's re-election campaign and alleged presidential involvement in the 1971 Ellsberg burglary.

Some of the papers Cox is known or believed to have wanted are:

ITT: In a memorandum from then-special presidential counsel Charles W. Colson to then-presidential chief of staff H. R. Haldeman on March 30, 1972, Colson listed a series of memos he said could be damaging if they were discovered because they alluded to discussions with the President as to the "agreed upon ends" in the resolution of the International Telephone & Telegraph Cor. antitrust case.

Another memo a few weeks later went to Haldeman with copies to Mitchell and others, Colson said, "setting forth the \$400,000 arrangement with ITT." He said this memo would show that the Justice Department knew ITT planned to give money to the Republican National Convention before the department settled its antitrust case against the giant conglomerate, a point vehemently denied at the time.

Other memos cited by Colson refer to intervention in the case by high-level officials including former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, former Treasury Secretary John B. Connally and former Commerce Secretary Peter G. Peterson.

MILK FUND: The milk producers lobby sent Nixon a letter on Dec. 16, 1971, discussing the industry's problems with price controls and mentioning it was about to start contributing \$2 million to the President's re-election campaign, according to investigative sources.

Three months later, on March 23, 1971, Nixon met personally at the White House with more than a dozen dairy industry lobbyists.

Also present was the then-secretary of agriculture, Clifford Hardin. Two days after the meeting Hardin reversed an earlier decision and announced an increase in federal milk price supports of 27 cents a hundred-weight, estimated to be worth as much as \$700 million in added income to dairymen.

A White House tape recording of the March 23 meeting could establish what, if anything, Nixon promised the dairy lobbyists, and what they promised him.

Cox also was investigating:

ELLSBERG: There is sworn testimony that Nixon personally authorized the trip by so-called White House plumbers that led to the 1971 burglary of the office of the psychiatrist of Daniel Ellsberg. Nixon denies advance knowledge of the break-in. White House tape recordings could show exactly what Nixon ordered his subordinates to do.

According to testimony, the President met in the White House oval office sometime in mid-August, 1971 with aides Ehrlichman and Egil Krogh Jr.

Krogh later told White House Counsel John W. Dean III that orders for the break-in came "right out of the oval office," according to Dean's testimony.

REBOZO: Cox had been investigating a \$100,000 cash gift in 1969-70 from billionaire Hughes to the President's personal friends and Florida neighbor, Rebozo. Why Hughes gave it, why the money went to Rebozo, whether it was for Nixon or for his campaign and whether the President knew about a Hughes-Rebozo connection all are questions without final answers.

The White House has said the money was a potential campaign contribution, Nixon didn't know about it until earlier this year and the money was given back.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Cox obtained guilty pleas from three corporations and two executives who made illegal corporate campaign contributions. Four other firms admitted similar donations. But the prosecutor was still trying to determine whether extortion was used to get campaign funds from companies that had sensitive dealings with the government.