

White House Shows Cox ITT File

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By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

After sitting on the request for more than a month, the White House yesterday provided special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox with a special file on the International Telephone & Telegraph Corp.

A spokesman for Cox said a member of the prosecution task force investigating the Administration's controversial settlement of three antitrust cases against ITT has started to inspect the documents at the White House, with orders to make copies of those deemed relevant.

Cox has called the file, compiled by an aide to ousted White House counsel John W. Dean III, "of the utmost importance" in pursuing the ITT inquiry.

Its release came just one day before a full-dress hearing in federal court here on Mr. Nixon's refusal to comply with a grand jury subpoena for tapes of the President's conversations with top White House advisers and campaign aides about the Watergate scandal.

Cox will confront attorney for the President Charles Alan Wright in the courtroom debate which is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. before chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica.

Disclosure of the White House documents on ITT may have been made to shore up Mr. Nixon's statement, in a July 25 letter to Judge Sirica.

The President said he "always made relevant material available to the courts except in those rare instances when to do so would be inconsistent with the public interest."

The President, however, has drawn the line on the tape recordings with a claim of "absolute power" to maintain their secrecy. White House lawyers maintained that their disclosure under court order would destroy "the confidentiality that the President regards as indispensable" to conversations in the Oval Office.

The ITT investigation centers on allegations that the Justice Department settled the three antitrust cases against ITT in 1971 in exchange for the corporation's promise of a \$400,000 subsidy for the 1972 Republican National Convention.

In a March 30, 1972 memo made public by the Senate Watergate committee earlier this month, then-White House special counsel Charles W. Colson warned of other internal memos that could "directly involve" Mr. Nixon in favorable settlement of the ITT antitrust suits and "lay this case on the President's doorstep."

Among those other memos, Colson wrote White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman, was one "alluding to discussions between the President and the Attorney General [John N. Mitchell] as 'the agreed-upon ends' in the resolution of the ITT case . . ."

The antitrust settlement

permitted ITT to acquire the Hartford Fire Insurance Co. despite a Justice Department action seeking divestiture, but required the big conglomerate to give up four other subsidiaries.

Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson assigned the ITT inquiry to Cox on June 8 as a result of what Richardson called "overlap with the Watergate investigation."

The investigation also involves a question of whether there was obstruction of justice during a Securities and Exchange Commission probe of the circumstances of ITT's merger with Hartford Fire and of the possibility of "insider" stock trading by corporate officials.

Still another issue involves the question of whether anyone perjured himself during 1972 Senate hearings on the nomination of Richardson's

predecessor as Attorney General, Richard G. Kleindienst.

Special prosecutor Cox disclosed his request for the ITT file at the White House at a press conference on July 27. He said then that his request for the documents, compiled by former assistant White House counsel Fred Fielding, had been "pending for some time."