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Federal Jury Names Nixon Co-Conspirator

WASHINGTON (AP) — The disclosure that a federal grand jury has named President Nixon an unindicted co-conspirator in the Watergate cover-up case added a potentially explosive element to the House impeachment inquiry Thursday.

"I think it's a matter members will view rather seriously," said Rep. Peter W. Rodino, D-N.J., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

The grand jury action, reportedly taken last March 1 on a vote of 19 to 0, will have "considerable weight" within the committee, predicted Rep. Wayne Owens, D-Utah.

"That's their judgment after they heard all they heard and it is a judgmental factor that is quite significant," said Owens, one of the 21 Democrats on the 38-member committee.

Republicans on the panel generally urged that its decision on whether the President's role in

Watergate was grounds for impeachment be based on the evidence rather than what the grand jury concluded.

"We have the responsibility under the Constitution to conduct our own investigation and come to our own conclusions," said Rep. Tom Railsback, R-Ill.

Members of the committee spent another day in closed session, this time hearing evidence on domestic surveillance by the Nixon administration and then moving on to the activities of the White House special investigations unit known as the plumbers.

As he entered the hearing, James D. St. Clair, the President's chief Watergate lawyer, confirmed published reports that the grand jury, which indicted seven persons for allegedly conspiring to obstruct the investigation of the Watergate break-in, had named the Presi-

dent an unindicted co-conspirator.

As such, Nixon was not charged with a crime.

The published reports appeared first in the Los Angeles Times and then the Washington

Post. Both newspapers said sources disclosed that the grand jury at first wanted to indict the President but Special Watergate Prosecutor Leon Jaworski told the panel it was doubtful it had the authority to indict a president.