

HOUSE PANEL BARS PRE-NOV. 7 INQUIRY INTO BUGGING CASE

Decision Virtually Rules Out
Congressional Hearings
Until After the Election

WHITE HOUSE ACCUSED
—OCT—4 1972
Patman Charges Pressure
—Six Democrats Among
Majority in 20-15 Vote
NYTimes

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 3—The House Banking and Currency Committee rejected today, 20 to 15, a proposal to hold public hearings on certain aspects of the alleged bugging of the Democratic party's Watergate headquarters.

The vote, in which six of the committee's 22 Democratic members joined the majority, virtually eliminated any chance for a public disclosure of details in the bugging case before the Nov. 7 Presidential election.

The defeat of the proposal had been expected. After the vote, the committee chairman, Representative Wright Patman, Democrat of Texas, read a prepared statement accusing the White House of "engineering" the outcome.

'Facts Will Come Out'

"I predict that the facts will come out," Mr. Patman said, "and when they do, I am convinced they will reveal why the White House was so anxious to kill the committee's investigation. The public will fully understand why this pressure was mounted."

But Representative William B. Widnall of New Jersey, the committee's ranking Republican member, denied Mr. Patman's allegations of pressure from the Nixon Administration. Mr. Widnall said he had had "no contact with the White House at all in connection with this investigation."

Representative Garry Brown, the Michigan Republican who has been the most vocal opponent of holding hearings on the matter, called the vote "a victory for the exercise of self-discipline."

5 Arrested in Office

Citing criminal and civil cases arising from the bugging, which are now before the Federal District Court here, Mr. Brown said that he felt that most members of the majority might support an investigation once those proceedings were over.

But he summed up the majority attitude on the committee as one of not being "for civil liberties and even-handed justice one moment and then forgetting that when the situation suits you."

Last month, a Federal grand jury here indicted seven men on charges of having conspired "to obtain and use" information from the Democrats' offices by tapping telephones, planting eavesdropping devices and photographing private party documents.

Five of the men named in the indictment were arrested inside the party's office at 2:30 A.M. last June 17. They car-

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House Committee Bars Hearing In Bugging Case Before Nov. 7

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ried electronic bugging equipment and copying cameras.

The two others charged, G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt Jr., are former White House aides. Mr. Liddy, a lawyer, was counsel to President Nixon's campaign finance committee at the time of the break-in.

Last week, the Justice Department, in a letter to Mr. Patman, expressed concern that the hearings might imperil the successful prosecution of the seven defendants by producing publicity that could jeopardize their right "to a speedy, fair and impartial trial."

The resolution defeated today named some 40 individuals and organizations that would have been subpoenaed, including a number of top Nixon campaign aides. None of the seven defendants was included, and the author of the resolution, Representative Henry S. Reuss, Democrat of Wisconsin, said he had been careful to omit all aspects of the bugging case touched upon by the grand jury.

Two of those named by Mr. Reuss as potential witnesses, Maurice H. Stans and Hugh W. Sloan Jr., are defendants in a \$3.2-million civil suit by Lawrence F. O'Brien, the former Democratic party chairman, in connection with the bugging.

Mr. Stans, the Republican party's finance chairman, is also plaintiff in two countersuits against Mr. O'Brien, one a \$5-million libel action and a second charging abuse of the judicial process for political purposes. All proceedings in the civil cases have been stayed pending the outcome of the criminal trial, which is not expected to begin before the November election.

The committee's investigation

would have dealt with possible infractions of the banking laws in the Watergate case.

For example, the committee would have sought an explanation for the appearance in a Miami bank account controlled by Bernard L. Barker, one of the men arrested inside the Democratic headquarters, of \$114,000 in checks representing contributions to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

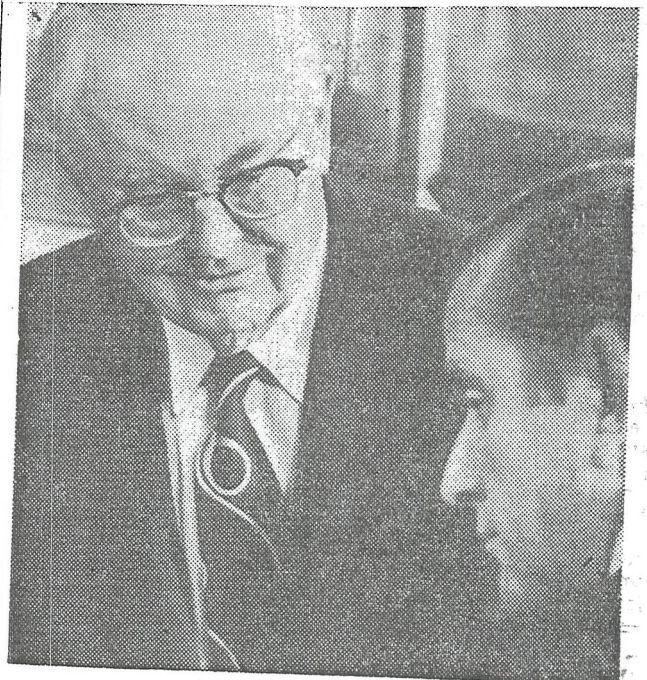
Four of the checks, totaling \$89,000, were drawn on a Mexican bank account, and committee sources have indicated that there may have been possible violations of Federal law requiring the registration of large sums of money transferred out of the country.

The Democrats voting with the committee majority today appeared to have no single reason for their action. One of them, Representative Frank J. Brasco of Brooklyn, a liberal who is a McGovern supporter, said he had given his vote much thought but had decided "that politics should stay out of justice."

One of the five others, Bill Chappell Jr. of Florida, visited the White House last week and had his photograph taken with President Nixon.

Mr. Chappell's press aide said that the President had placed no restriction on using the photograph during Mr. Chappell's campaign and that the substance of their discussion would be made public tomorrow.

After the proceedings in the civil suits were stayed, Democratic party officials pinned their hopes on Congress for politically helpful disclosures in the case. But the likelihood that other committees of either the Senate or the House will take up the matter now appears extremely remote.



Associated Press
Before House Banking and Currency Committee voted on Watergate inquiry, Wright Patman, left, chairman, conferred with John H. Rousselot, California Republican.