

'Only a First Step'

Cox Had Wanted More Than Tapes

A Probe Beyond Watergate

Washington

Former Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox said yesterday the presidential tape recordings over which he was fired "were clearly only a first step in seeking a great deal of important evidence from the White House."

Cox said that as part of an investigation of campaign contributions he would have sought accounts of a meeting between President Nixon and former Agriculture Secretary Clifford A. Hardin that dealt with milk pricing.

The White House has refused to make such material available in connection with a civil court questioning a milk price increase granted by Hardin soon after dairy interests pledged \$2 million for Mr. Nixon's 1972 campaign.

Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Nixon's chief of staff, would not say yesterday whether accounts of the Hardin-Nixon meeting would be made available to a new Watergate prosecutor. He said the question was hypothetical because Cox had never asked for that material.

DEGREE

Haig said he was "confident with a reasonable degree of good will" that all of the information that the next special prosecutor will require will be made available



AP Wirephoto

ARCHIBALD COX
'A great deal of important evidence'

to him in the form that is necessary for him to conduct his operation.

But Haig added: "Under no circumstances would we ever be true to the preservation of the powers of the of-

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fice of the President to permit any investigator a fishing — free rein fishing expedition, into the vital discussions that occur in the President's office.

Cox appeared on the NBC television show "Meet the Press." Haig appeared on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Haig repeated that Cox

was fired October 20 as special prosecutor because he "insisted on a carte blanche ability in the future to demand further presidential tapes and memoranda."

TAPES

Cox said he had to say "no" to President Nixon's attempted tapes compromise of October 19 as soon as it was said that as the price of getting an account of the disputed White House tapes, "I must abandon the fundamental of any impartial investigation that I be free to seek evidence wherever it was in accord with the rules of law."

Asked about the import-

ance of the tapes Mr. Nixon finally agreed to turn over to the district court, Cox said:

"I think it's quite possible that the nine tapes will turn out to be less important in a practical sense than they have been in a symbolic sense. They were clearly

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only the first step in seeking a great deal of important evidence in the White House."

Cox said had he agreed not to further pursue Nixon materials in court, "that would have become a deal, a coverup, I don't think you can restore confidence in our institutions by that kind of arrangement however much it might quiet things for the moment."

Cox said he believes Congress should pass legislation providing for a new special prosecutor. He said he would prefer to see the appointment made by the chief judge of the U.S. District Court in Washington despite some possible constitutional problems with such an approach.

Mr. Nixon said Friday that acting Attorney General Robert H. Bork would name a new prosecutor this week.

JOB

Cox, asked if he would consider accepting the job again if named by a nominator other than Mr. Nixon, said "I think it would be unsound. I suppose if I were pressed I would have to consider it, but I want to make it awfully plain I am not looking for it."

Cox declined to speculate on motives Mr. Nixon may have had in firing him, but he insisted he was not out to get the President in his investigation.

He said he received occasional indirect impressions that the White House was troubled with some of his moves, but would not be more specific.

Time magazine said yesterday, however, that Cox was dismissed after the White House challenged his intention to pursue four areas of investigation: a

1970 fund-raising project for Nixon-favored candidates, the handling of anti-Nixon demonstrators at 1972 rallies, activities of the "plumbers" unit and telephone taps on administration employees and newsmen.

Senators Birch Bayh (Dem-Ind.) and Marlow Cook (Rep-Ky.), both members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, disagreed yesterday on legislation for naming a new special prosecutor.

They appeared on ABC's "Issues and Answers."

BILL

Bayh said the best alternative was a bill introduced by a majority of the Senate providing for appointment by the district chief judge.

Cook, who said he is not especially happy with Mr. Nixon's appointment outline

either, said there are major constitutional problems with turning the appointment power over to a judge.

Their committee is to hear Cox as a witness today at the start of hearings which could lead to legislation on a special prosecutor.

Associated Press