

NATURE OF INQUIRY ON NIXON AT ISSUE

Impeachment Preliminaries Viewed at White House as Adversary Proceeding

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 14 — Attorneys for the White House and the House Judiciary Committee have avoided a confrontation but are in apparent disagreement about the fundamental nature of the committee's inquiry into whether President Nixon should be impeached.

The committee's two chief attorneys, John M. Doar and Albert E. Jenner Jr., briefed committee members for an hour and a half today on a meeting the attorneys held Tuesday with James D. St. Clair, special counsel to the President.

They reported that Mr. St. Clair took the position that the matter was an adversary proceeding in which the White House should have the right to file counterbriefs on legal points developed in the inquiry and to cross-examine witnesses.

On the other hand, the committee attorneys say they reject this concept and argue that the inquiry is a "search for the truth," not a lawsuit.

Could Make Challenges

The significance of the White House position, should it prevail, is that it would allow attorneys for the President to challenge and perhaps delay each step of the inquiry.

Both Mr. Doar, the chief counsel, and Mr. Jenner, the minority counsel, were careful to characterize the private meeting with Mr. St. Clair as "cordial" and to point out that they had detected, as Mr. Jenner said, "no element of noncooperation whatsoever."

However, both of them indicated the conflicting views of the inquiry.

"There was some sparring, actually," Mr. Jenner told newsmen, "but it was pleasant."

Mr. Doar said that he and Mr. Jenner had tried to impress on the President's attorney that the inquiry "is not like a lawsuit but it is a search for the truth."

The White House wants the right to file legal briefs on such issues as what constitutes an impeachable offense and to cross-examine witnesses, should the committee decide to call any.

Find Congress 'Supreme'

Members of the committee reported that both Mr. Jenner and Mr. Doar had told them they rejected the concept of cross-examination and argued that "Congress is supreme in this area."

The attorneys, in their report, also indicated a special interest in the question of the President's personal finances.

Committee members said Mr. Doar had told them that two staff members had been assigned as liaison between the inquiry and the Congressional Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation, which is investigating the President's tax returns. He told them further, they said, that two investigators on the inquiry staff were in Los Angeles today investigating certain aspects of the President's finances.

No requests for specific information were made of the White House but the general areas of interest were outlined, Mr. Doar said.

"It was generally a cordial meeting in which we discussed the ways in which this inquiry could move forward," he said, "and Mr. St. Clair made it perfectly clear he would not make any commitment at all on the matters at this time."

The committee did move

today on one point made by Mr. St. Clair, who reportedly told the committee lawyers of the President's concern for "the procedures for handling and the control over documents made available to the committee."

Rules are being drafted, for the full committee's consideration, that would limit access to evidence gathered by the inquiry staff.

A Limit on Access

Although the chairman, Peter W. Rodino, Democrat of New Jersey, declined to discuss specifics of the proposed rules, they would apparently allow only the chairman and the ranking Republican member of the committee, Edward Hutchinson of Michigan to have regular access to the evidence gathered.

All other members of the committee would be provided with detailed indexes of evidence and could, on request, have access to specific material under security regulations that would bar copying.

The rules, however, are not to be subject to White House approval or disapproval, Mr. Rodino said.

"We are not saying to Mr. St. Clair that these are the rules we adopted," Mr. Rodino said. "We are saying, we have rules and it is now necessary to move forward and we will make out requests for information."

While the inquiry has yet to

request any evidence from the White House, a mass of material has already been collected. Mr. Rodino characterized the situation today when he said that the staff "is sifting through information spread all over the second floor of the Congressional Annex."

That information is made up primarily of documents and testimony taken publicly by the Senate Watergate committee.

In addition, Mr. Rodino said today that a request had been sent to the special Watergate prosecutor, Leon Jaworski, seeking a complete list of all materials his office had obtained in its investigations.

Stevenson Plans Disclosure As Required by His Bill

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14 (AP)

—Senator Adlai E. Stevenson 3d, said today that he would make public disclosure his income and taxes in line with legislation he is proposing.

The Illinois Democrat said that a bill he will introduce next week will require all elected Federal officials and candidates for Federal office to disclose annually the amount and sources of their income, taxes paid, and other personal financial data.

Numerous bills of this type have been introduced in recent years, but none has been passed.