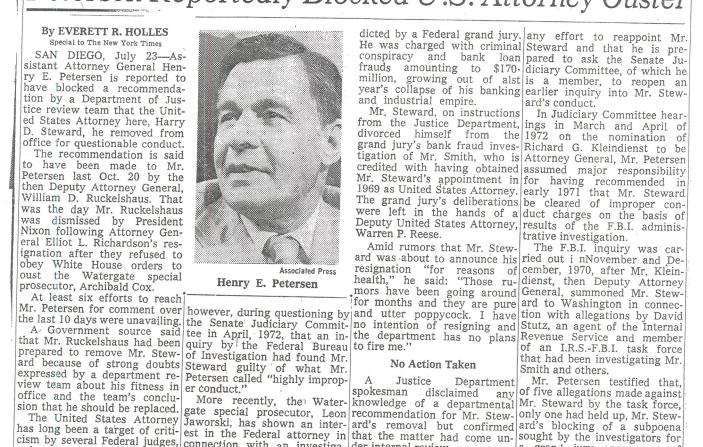
Petersen Reportedly Blocked U.S. Attorney Ouster

fornia.

Insufficient Grounds

moval.

Mr. Petersen acknowledged,



office and the team's conclusion that he should be replaced. The United States Attorney has long been a target of criticism by several Federal judges, a large segment of the local bar and a Congressional group headed by Senator James V. Tunney, Democrat of California.

In evaluating Mr. Steward's fitness to remain in office, the Mr. Petersen's reported quashing of the review team's recommendation marked the second time in four years that he had absolved Mr. Steward of charges of obstructing justice and other misconduct on the ground that they were insufficient to warrant his removal.

fitness to remain in office, the Justice Department review team was said to have cited his successful efforts in early prosecution his political patron, C. Arnolt Smith, the financier and a long-time friend of President Nixon, and Mr. Smith's chief lieutenant, Frank Thornmoval. prosecution his political patron, C. Arnolt Smith, the financier and a long-time friend of President Nixon, and Mr. Smith's pointment. Chief lieutenant, Frank Thornton.

Mr. Smith was recently interest of the will strongly oppose

mining whether the Federal attorney, whose initial four-year term expired last Oct. 5, should be reappointed as the federal should be reappointed by the federa be reappointed or replaced.

Mr. Petersen subsequently took no action, with the result that Mr. Steward has continued to serve as United States

A Justice Department spokesman disclaimed any knowledge of a departmental recommendation for Mr. Steward's removal but confirmed that the matter had come under internal review.

The evaluation of Mr. Steward was ordered by Mr. Ruckelshaus as a basis for determining whether the Federal at-