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Vesco Prober
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Cites Cases of Interference

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NEW YORK, April 1—The head of government's investigation of financier Robert L. Vesco today detailed six attempts to interfere in the case by his higher-ups.

Stanley Sporkin, now director of the enforcement division of the Securities and Exchange Commission, testified as the seventh week of the trial of former Cabinet officers and Nixon campaign chiefs John N. Mitchell and Maurice H. Stans began.

They are accused of interfering in the SEC's probe of Vesco in exchange for a secret \$200,000 cash contribution from Vesco, then with trying to cover up the fact of the contribution.

Sporkin was the prosecution's 29th witness, and the prosecutors said today that they expected to complete their case Tuesday or Wednesday.

Sporkin said that the first involvement of a superior came when then-SEC Chairman William J. Casey called him on Nov. 1, 1972, to try to get him to postpone the taking of testimony from two Vesco secretaries who knew about the contribution.

Casey, now head of the Export-Import Bank, testified here March 20 that he had called Sporkin at the request of then-White House counsel John W. Dean III to try to get the depositions postponed. Dean subsequently testified that Mitchell had asked him to do it.

But when Casey appeared here, he said only that he had called Sporkin about the depositions, that Sporkin had called Sporkin about the depositions, that Sporkin had called back to say a delay was impossible, and that he had called Dean back and told him that—and that the conversation was "short and sweet."

Sporkin testified today that Casey called him yet again, after normal office hours that day, asking "again why we cannot postpone these witnesses; he mentioned to me that this was a week before the election; he said to me that he believed that they could be politically embarrassing if their testimony came out . . ."

Sporkin said he told Casey that "it would be wrong, that

this was not the proper way to proceed, that the lawyers for the witnesses had not requested the adjournment, as

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far as I knew, and that he must rely on my judgment on this matter."

"Some day," Sporkin said he told Casey, "you are going to be thankful for relying on my judgment in this matter."

Last week, G. Bradford Cook testified that he spoke with Stans about the case on a number of occasions. Cook, who technically was Sporkin's superior on the case, eventually succeeded Casey as chairman of the SEC and resigned after 74 days in the job in the wake of the indictment of Mitchell and Stans here.

Today Sporkin said Cook's first involvement regarding the contribution came when Cook urged Sporkin not to worry about the destination of Vesco's money (\$250,000 at the time) but only its source and worked out a delay at a deposition to be given by Harry L. Sears, a New Jersey politician who was Vesco's lawyer in the matter and who also was a friend of Mitchell. Sears had been present, he testified here, when the contribution was handed to Stans.

The crucial Cook involve-

ment came, said Sporkin, when Cook challenged a paragraph in the impending suit the SEC was to file against Vesco and 40 others, alleging \$224 million in looting from mutual funds.

That paragraph detailed the movement of the \$250,000, and the refusal of Vesco employees to testify about it.

"He was insisting that it be taken out," said Sporkin, who eventually acceded to Cook's suggestions and rewrote the paragraph to make it less specific.

Cook testified here last week that Stans requested him to get the paragraph changed to keep the contribution quiet.

Then again, Sporkin testified, Cook complained when transcripts were about to be filed in the case that bore on the \$250,000.

Two months after the SEC suit had been filed with the broad paragraph about the \$250,000, Sporkin testified, Cook again talked to him about Sears' appearance and asked whether Sears' deposition could be limited to just the source of the money, and not the destination.

Sporkin said he told Cook that was "ridiculous . . . that it

couldn't be done and wouldn't be done."

In February, said Sporkin, Cook told him "in confidence" that the money had gone to the Nixon campaign and had been returned.

"He then asked me whether we could postpone making our end of it public until the Committee to Re-elect the President had made it public," said Sporkin. "I told him no, absolutely not."

Sporkin says that, instead, he asked Cook to ask the reelection officials "to stop payment on the check (returning Vesco's money) because in that way we could then get the money, then we would be able to get the money and put it into court."

He said Cook called him a day or two later to say that the check had already cleared.

Vesco, who was indicted in the case with Stans, Mitchell and Sears, is now in Costa Rica. In an interview with Walter Cronkite taped over the weekend and broadcast on the CBS Evening News tonight, Vesco disputed that Stans—as is charged here—ever demanded that his contribution be in cash.