

SFChronicle
Kleindienst

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No 'Sabotage' Probe Planned

Washington

Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst said yesterday that the Justice Department has no "credible evidence" that any federal laws were violated during alleged acts of political sabotage against the Democrats by operatives of President Nixon's re-election campaign.

He added that no special investigation of the reported sabotage is now underway and that such a probe does not appear to be warranted. Asked whether it might not be "useful" to stop the operation of any "sabotage squad" before the presidential election on November 7, the Attorney General suggested that "public attention" to the matter would probably serve as a sufficient "deterrent" to such activity.

MEDIA

"The full matter . . . if there is one, had gotten such an exposure in some parts of the media — like I say, based on hearsay, rumor speculation — that the public attention to it, if any does exist, is probably a great deterrent," Kleindienst told reporters.

Just two hours earlier, a top aide to Democratic presidential candidate George S. McGovern demanded an immediate Justice Department inquiry into an alleged Republican scheme to coerce money from large corporations for political sabotage, in exchange for favors granted by the Nixon administration.

Frank Mankiewicz, McGovern's national political coordinator, said at a

ber 20 calling his attention to 13 specific alleged improprieties.

"I do not believe that we have an investigation with respect" to the alleged sabotage, Kleindienst told reporters as he left a luncheon meeting of the Naval officers wives club at the Sheraton - Park Hotel where he was the featured speaker — "because as of right now, any evidence that has come to us would not indicate the violation of a federal law."

But the Attorney General quickly said "That doesn't mean that we wouldn't (investigate) if that kind of evidence would be made available."

SQUAD

He said that he himself was not convinced of the existence of what his questioners called a Republican "sabotage squad" working against the Democrats.

Kleindienst repeatedly challenged the reporters to "get the evidence to me that would indicate that a specific person has violated a specific criminal law, and my department will investigate it."

"About all I've seen is what I would characterize generally as hearsay and speculative reports in some of the newspapers," Kleindienst said, echoing the position recently taken by White House and Republican campaign officials.

The reports, in the Washington Post and other publications, have cited sources close to the federal investigation of the Watergate bugging affair and Justice Department and FBI files on the subject as the source of information about other—perhaps related—acts of