

# Reuss Wants Petersen Replaced By Outsider in Watergate Study

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WASHINGTON, April 23 — "unwarranted." He is fully capable of conducting a fair, impartial and extensive inquiry into all aspects of this matter," the spokesman said.

Representative Henry S. Reuss said today that neither Assistant Attorney General Henry E. Petersen nor anyone else from the Justice Department should be in charge of the Watergate investigation, suggesting that an impartial outsider be chosen instead.

Mr. Reuss, a Wisconsin Democrat who is a senior member of the House Banking and Currency Committee, charged in a statement that Mr. Petersen had "orchestrated the torpedoing" of an investigation by the House committee last fall.

Mr. Reuss charged that "Mr. Petersen's reasoning was plainly spacious" when he asked the committee in a letter to call off its inquiry because "widely publicized hearing at this time" might imperil the trial of seven indicted conspirators.

A Justice Department spokesman responded today that the Assistant Attorney General's letter had been "not only entirely proper but absolutely necessary" and that Mr. Petersen had been "concerned solely with the legal aspects."

"It [the letter] was written to assure a fair and orderly trial for those indicted and was not intended to delay or impede a Congressional inquiry into this matter at an appropriate time," the department spokesman said.

## Delay Is Criticized

The House Banking and Currency Committee began a study of the bugging case in August at Mr. Reuss's suggestion. On Oct. 3, after receipt of Mr. Petersen's letter, the panel voted against subpoena power and effectively killed further inquiry.

In his letter, Mr. Petersen had cited court decisions against prejudicial publicity prior to trial. Also, the White House was understood to have lobbied against a pre-election inquiry and Republicans on the committee opposed it solidly.

"Hearings by the Banking and Currency Committee last fall would no more have imperiled 'a successful prosecution' than would hearings by the Ervin Committee today," Mr. Reuss said, alluding to a current Senate inquiry under Senator Sam J. Ervin, Democrat of North Carolina.

he six-month delay from the end of the House inquiry until the beginning to the Senate inquiry, Mr. Reuss said in an interview, allowed more time for the "shredding of evidence" and the concoction of "perjured testimony."

Mr. Reuss called on President Nixon to remove Mr. Petersen, "or anyone else from the Department of Justice," as head of the investigation. An "outside, uncompromised, and unimpeachable citizen" should be picked, he said.

Dropping Mr. Petersen, the department said, would be

Mr. Petersen was placed in full charge of the current Justice Department investigation when Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst withdrew on the ground that it involved people with which he has had "personal and professional" ties.

Mr. Reuss said that if further indictments were returned it would be improper for a Congressional committee to call those accused. But he said the banking panel has not been interested in the seven men charged last fall, but in those who might have been their superiors.

Senate sources said that while it was impossible to reach a judgment until actual indictments were issued, it was unlikely that new criminal proceedings would have much long-range effect on the Congressional inquiry.

The White House is said to be eager to reduce the impact of the Ervin Committee hearings. An early and sensational trial could take some of the edge off them, but a court proceeding would probably be relatively narrow and less exploratory.

## No Delay Anticipated

The panel has scheduled hearings for about May 15. These could be postponed if a criminal trial was imminent, sources said, or the focus of the first round of hearings could be shifted to major areas other than those in the trial.

The committee appears confident of its ability to start hearings next month, and sources have stressed that there is no talk of putting them off. Any area that is skipped will be covered later, the sources said.

In another development today, Senator Richard S. Schweiker, Republican of Pennsylvania, said the Committee for the Re-election of the President had been "deeply involved" in the Watergate case and ought to be disbanded.

Observing that "the election has been over for nearly six months," Senator Schweiker said in Philadelphia that the re-election committee "has come to stand for everything the [Republican] party is against."

Also, Senator Robert C. Byrd, Democrat of West Virginia, said President Nixon should suspend any White House officials who are about to be indicted and should "reconstitute" the White House staff.

Mr. Byrd, the assistant Democratic leader, charged that John W. Dean 3d, the President's counsel who conducted a White House investigation of the Watergate case, had misled Mr. Nixon and ought to resign.