

## Cox Eyes Campaign 'Extortion'

By George M. Lardner  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox' staff is investigating whether the Nixon campaign's fund-raising practices resulted in extortion or other illegal activities.

A special federal grand jury may eventually be impaneled to look into the financing of the President's 1972 re-election campaign, but the inquiry is still in its preliminary stages, a spokesman said.

"It's not close to being ready for a grand jury," said James S. Doyle, a special assistant to Cox.

He said the question of possible extortion from corporations and individuals in the form of campaign contributions was only one aspect of the investigation.

The broad-based inquiry, Doyle said, will attempt to cover any conflicts with federal law, including the possibility of income tax violations on the part of contributors.

The Washington Post reported last fall that chief Nixon fund-raiser Maurice Stans' conversations with corporate executives sometimes combined the subject of campaign fund solicitations and the corporation's problems with the federal government.

For example, Stans reminded steel executives of his continuing efforts on their behalf to avoid harsh remedies for their industrial pollution problems. And he reportedly asked a Greyhound Corp. official for a contribution in a conversation that included mention by Greyhound of its interest in legislation to permit wider buses.

Campaign contributions out of corporate funds are illegal. Stans, however, often gave corporations "quotas" of what he expected to be contributed by their executives. American Motors Corp. officials said they flatly refused a request by representatives of the Finance Committee to Re-Elect the President for a contribution of \$100,000 from its executives.

Cox' investigation into presidential campaign financing is being directed by one of his special assistants, Thomas F. McBride, 44, a former Justice Department prosecutor and onetime assistant district attorney in New York City.

Another major facet of the inquiry is expected to involve the Nixon campaign's collection of more than \$1 million in cash before April 7, 1972, when the new Federal Campaign Financing Reporting Act went into effect.

In a related inquiry, Sen. Frank Moss (D-Utah) and investigators assigned to his Senate Commerce Subcommittee on the Consumer have been looking into allegations that some big contributors to the President's campaign were rewarded with business breaks.

"It may be that consumer dollars are now paying back the major contributors," Moss said.

Moss' investigators, who have been at work for about two weeks, may join forces with the staff of the Senate Watergate Committee to avoid any duplication of effort. The Watergate Committee's chief counsel, Samuel Dash, has reportedly assigned some of his staffers to look into similar charges of links between contributions of \$100,000 or more and the actions of government regulatory agencies.