

WATERGATE

House group drops 2 impeachment counts

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WASHINGTON — Some members of the House Judiciary Committee said yesterday they have eliminated at least two possible grounds for impeachment of President Nixon — the impoundment of appropriations and the secret 1970 bombing of Cambodia.

Several Republicans and some Democrats on the committee said they would not vote for impeachment on these counts. But they hesitated to rule out any of the other issues raised in an impeachment resolution listing over 20 possible impeachable acts.

The committee, which is conducting an inquiry into possible grounds for impeaching Nixon, has instructed its staff to submit a legal brief by Feb. 20 with conclusions on what constitutes an impeachable offense. Among the other possible grounds were obstruction of justice, knowledge of a felony and accepting favors for campaign contributions — most of them related to Watergate.

"Impoundment and bombing are not impeachable and border on being frivolous," said Rep. Charles Wiggins (R-Calif.) of El Monte.

One Democrat who asked not to be identified added: "We've got 30 or 40 other things we can impeach him on."

One impeachment resolution charged Nixon with violating his oath to uphold the law when he refused to spend an estimated \$40 billion after signing appropriations bills into law.

Another resolution charged the President with "misleading the American people" and submitting perjured testimony to the Senate concerning the secret bombing.

Rep. Wiley Mayne, (R-Iowa) answered "clearly not" when asked if these two counts would lead to impeachment.

"I'm sticking with the language of the Constitution" which lists bribery, treason and high crimes and misdemeanors for impeachment, Mayne said.

Rep. Robert Kastenmeier, (D-Wis.), said impoundment and bombing were politically insufficient to bring impeachment. He said there was no national consensus the acts were wrong.