

NYTimes  
**Nixon Tells His Lawyers  
To Consult Panel Counsel**

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON FEB 8 1974  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 7—Lawyers for the White House and the House Judiciary Committee will meet soon, at President Nixon's initiative, to discuss the extent of White House

cooperation with the committee's investigation of Mr. Nixon's conduct in office.

The plans for the meeting were disclosed today by the committee chairman, Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr., Democrat of New Jersey.

The Senate Watergate committee voted formally, meantime, to turn over all of its investigative files to the House Judiciary Committee for the impeachment inquiry. The unanimous decision, which had been expected, will give the House panel access to millions of words of Senate testimony and thousands of documents, but not to such items as the Watergate tap recordings that the President has refused to give to the Senate committee.

Mr. Rodino said that the two senior lawyers for the House committee's impeachment staff—John M. Doar and Albert E. Jenner—would meet "promptly" with James D. St. Clair, the special counsel to the President for Watergate matters.

No date was set immediately for the encounters, the first between the White House and officials of the committee since the impeachment inquiry was begun three months ago.

At a briefing for newsmen outside his Capitol Hill office, Mr. Rodino declined to characterize the nature of the prospective meeting. But Representative Edward Hutchinson of Michigan, the senior Republican on the committee, said he was confident it meant that "real cooperation will be forthcoming."

President Nixon pledged in his State of the Union Address last week to cooperate with the committee, but conditioned the pledge on a vow to do nothing

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that would impair the independence of the Presidency.

The announcement of the forthcoming meeting followed by one day a 410-to-4 vote of the full House to give the Judiciary Committee broad power to subpoena any witness and documents it might need, including the President and his papers.

The plans for the meeting were made in an exchange of spare, cautious and lawyer-like letters. Mr. St. Clair wrote the following letter to Mr. Rodino on Tuesday:

"The President has instructed me to advise you that I am to make myself available to consult with you or your special counsel, Mr. John M. Doar, and members of his staff, with reference to the current investigation being conducted by your committee.

"Pursuant to this instruction, I will be pleased to confer with you or your counsel at any time that you or he may desire."

Mr. Rodino, who made the letter public today, said that Mr. Doar telephoned Mr. St. Clair yesterday to acknowledge receipt of the invitation. The committee's special counsel on impeachment also sent to Mr. St. Clair a noncommittal letter promising to "be in touch" with the White House later.

After a one-hour meeting today with Mr. Hutchinson and the committee's two senior lawyers, Mr. Rodino said they had agreed that Mr. Doar and Mr. Jenner should "arrange to meet with Mr. St. Clair and will be doing so promptly."

The committee staff has yet to decide which specific White House tape recordings and documents it will seek for the impeachment inquiry. Mr. Doar and Mr. Jenner are expected to try to limit the discussion with Mr. St. Clair to possible ground rules for obtaining the material and assuring its confidentiality.

Earlier today, the House Republican leaders named Representative Delbert L. Latta, an Ohio conservative, to fill a vacancy on the Judiciary Committee for the duration of the impeachment investigation.

Mr. Latta, a senior member of the Rules Committee, said in an interview that he had not sought the assignment to the Judiciary Committee and that he would resign from the panel when the investigation was completed.

His selection, which came as a surprise to Republicans already on the committee, was announced by Representative John J. Rhodes of Arizona, the House Republican leader.

"He was prevailed upon," Mr. Rhodes said candidly. "He's got the scars to prove it."

According to Mr. Rhodes,

the choice was based on a desire to fill the committee vacancy with someone who had "experience on [Capitol] Hill and broad experience in the law."

Representative Lawrence J. Hogan, Republican of Maryland, told newsmen that he believed the "real motivation" behind the choice of Mr. Latta was to "keep the seat warm for Ohio."

The vacancy was created by the resignation last month of Representative William J. Keating, an Ohio Republican who left to become the publisher of The Cincinnati Enquirer.

Mr. Rhodes said that Mr. Latta had been "the obvious choice" and that there had been "no rival" not already preoccupied with duties on other major committees.

But Mr. Latta said that he was "head over heels in work right now" on the Rules Committee, that the party leaders had chosen him "like a bolt out of the sky" and that he had resisted until it became clear "the leadership wanted me" on Judiciary. z z z

Mr. Latta will bring to the committee a view on impeachment considerably more restrictive than that of a number of his colleagues. He said that he would study the evidence "with an open mind" but that he believed the President could be impeached only on evidence indicating he had committed a violation of criminal law.

A poll of 32 per cent of the 37 other committee members, taken in November, showed that all but six believed the President could be impeached for a severe breach of public trust that was not necessarily a matter for criminal indictment.