

SFChronicle
Emphasis on Two Issues
 SFChronicle

APR 26 1974

APR 26 1974

Impeach Probers Zero In

Washington

The House impeachment inquiry staff reported yesterday that it is concentrating its investigation on the major Watergate allegations and President Nixon's tax problems.

The staff told the House Judiciary Committee that it is halting its inquiries into 15 of the 56 original allegations against the President.

In each of the 15 cases the staff said "either there is no substantial evidence known to the staff that supports an allegation of wrongdoing or the evidence is insufficient to justify devoting the resources required to complete a thorough investigation."

Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. (Dem-N.J.) emphasized that the final decision on dropping any allegation will be up to committee members.

During the 2½-hour meeting the committee also voted 34 to 4 to give the White House five more days to respond to a subpoena for tapes of 42 presidential conversations.

Along this line, Doar said, the committee is preparing a list of written questions to send to the President to determine whether "criminal fraud" was involved.

The White House response was put off until 10 a.m. on Tuesday. 30 APR

Most of the items set aside by the staff include allegations that presidential friends and big campaign contributors received favored treatment from government agencies.

Also halted was the investigation of possible impeachable conduct in connection with the President's refusal to spend appropriated funds and his attempt to shut down the Office of Economic Opportunity without prior

congressional approval.

The report said the staff is continuing its investigation of allegations stemming from a \$100,000 campaign

contribution from billionaire Howard Hughes, a \$200,000 cash contribution from financier Robert L. Vesco, contributions from the dairy industry and a pledge from International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. to help underwrite the 1972 Republican convention.

Much of the discussion at the meeting involved the staff's plans to examine allegations that criminal fraud may have been committed in the preparation of President Nixon's income tax returns. Both the congressional Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation and the Internal Revenue Service have declared that the President incorrectly took tax deductions for the donation of his pre-presidential papers.

Both the committee and the IRS said that as a result of the disallowed deduction for the papers, as well as other disallowed items, the President owed more than \$450,000 in additional taxes.

The impeachment inquiry staff noted that the joint committee "made no investigation whether or not there was criminal tax fraud for which the President is responsible." Such an investigation is under way by the special Watergate prosecutor's office, but the impeachment staff said it "is likely to be prolonged and its result will not be available to the committee under the committee's contemplated timetable."

John Doar, chief counsel for the impeachment inquiry, said the investigation of the President's taxes will concentrate on the gift of his papers.

The four who opposed the delay were liberal Demo-

crats. They were Representatives Jerome Waldie of California, Robert Drinan of Massachusetts, and Charles Rangel and Elizabeth Holtzman of New York.

An allegation stemming from secret U.S. bombing raids in Cambodia between March, 1969, and August, 1973, remained under active consideration at least until next week, when the committee hopes to obtain a Senate Armed Services Committee report on the bombing.

Representative Robert F. Drinan, (Dem-Mass.), asked Doar if he intended to subpoena White House tapes of conversations about the bombing between the President and member of the Joint Chiefs of staff. Doar said no decision had been made yet.

Drinan also said he opposes halting the investigation into impeachment and the OEO shutdown.

Issues still under active investigation include:

- Domestic surveillance activities alleged to have been conducted by or at the direction of the White House.
- Political intelligence and espionage activities during the 1972 presidential campaign.
- The Watergate break-in and coverup.
- Allegations that contributions to the President's re-election campaign were given in exchange for ambassadorships.
- Allegations that the White House attempted to use the Federal Communications Commission to control and retaliate against news media criticism.
- Allegations that the White House attempted to use the IRS to harass political "enemies."

Among the issues on which investigation has been halted were:

- Allegations of White House involvement in illegal campaign contributions received from corporate funds.
- Allegations concerning illegal campaign contributions from foreign nationals and from labor unions.
- Allegations that the White House caused friends of the President to be given favored treatment by the comptroller of the currency, who is involved in the regulation of national banks.
- An allegation that the antitrust division of the Justice Department dropped an investigation of a corporation owned by a friend of the President.
- Allegations of attempts to obtain campaign contributions in return for promises of assistance with the Federal Housing Administration.

Associated Press