

# Doar Calls Transcripts 'Inadequate'

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House Judiciary Committee special counsel John Doar yesterday strongly criticized as "inadequate and unsatisfactory" the edited White House transcripts which President Nixon insists give the "full story of Watergate" so far as his involvement is concerned.

Doar told the committee in closed session and later repeated to newsmen that errors and omissions discovered by his staff "make me believe the committee should not rely on these transcripts" in a matter as important as the possible impeachment of the President of the United States.

Doar's criticism was termed "gratuitous in the extreme" later in the day by James D. St. Clair, President Nixon's special counsel. In a letter to House Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.), St. Clair said that "differences, of course, can exist as to the interpretations that can be placed on a conversation (I should also point out that simply because verbal differences appear between committee transcripts and White House transcripts [it] does not mean that the committee staff is correct and the White House is wrong in each instance.)"

St. Clair said that the committee's experience with the tapes and transcripts "discloses the variety of meanings, degrees of inaudibility and the like that can exist, but I suggest that despite such verbal differences, the meaning of the entire conversation viewed as a whole is not subject to serious differences of opinion as to what is said."

The accuracy of the transcripts becomes crucial because of Mr. Nixon's flat refusal to give the committee the actual tape recordings of his conversations dealing with Watergate. The committee now must rely in considerable part on the President's edited transcripts of the conversations to determine his involvement in the Watergate break-in and cover-up.

Mr. Nixon gave the committee the same 18 tapes that he had given the Watergate special prosecutor. But when the committee asked for tapes of 42 additional conversations, the President responded with the edited transcripts instead. And when the committee requested tapes of 76 more conversations and then issued a subpoena for 11 of them, Mr. Nixon refused to turn over any more material.

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Doar said his staff was able to detect inaccuracies and omissions in the transcripts by listening, with equipment superior to that in the White House to the 18 tapes received and comparing the committee and White House transcripts.

Committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.) told newsmen: "The areas that concern us are misstatements, omissions, misattributions, additions, inaudibles and a category we can't define marked in the transcripts as 'material unrelated to presidential action deleted.'"

Doar said "additions" meant that in some places the White House added some unspoken words, in paraphrasing sentences which apparently could not be heard distinctly.

Doar and Republican counsel Albert Jenner said the discrepancies point up again the need for the committee to obtain the tapes so members of Congress can hear the "best evidence."

"The only way to satisfy the American people is to get the best evidence," said Doar. "The best evidence is not the edited tapes."

Mr. Nixon has invited Rodino and Rep. Edward Hutchinson (R-Mich.), the committee's senior Republican, to go to the White House without staff to listen to the requested tapes to verify the transcripts.

Doar called this "constitutionally impermissible . . . Every member of Congress is required to make a personal judgment as to what these conversations mean. That responsibility cannot be delegated to the chairman and ranking minority member."

Rodino said that he and

Hutchinson agreed that "for us to listen alone would not be an adequate way to discharge our responsibility."

Doar added that members of Congress need the assistance of staff to "digest and assimilate" the tapes.

Jenner said he agreed completely with Doar's statement. "In a case such as this there is an absolute need for the very best evidence . . . so the American people will be satisfied with what is done"

Rep. Tom Railsback (R-Ill.) agreed with Doar that the committee should have the tapes. "They make conversations more understandable. Some make the President look better. You read the transcripts and some conversations sound idiotic. Then you listen to them and they make sense."

Rep. Robert McClory (R-Ill.), second senior Republican, said he agreed "entirely" that the committee should be given the actual tapes to hear. "Our transcripts [prepared by Doar's staff] aren't perfect. One entire sentence was left out in transcribing."

The tapes requested cover a period from April 4, 1972, well before the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in, to June 4, 1973, nearly a year later. For many of these conversations, in which Doar's staff believes Watergate was discussed, the committee has received neither tapes nor transcripts.

Doar said discrepancies discovered give him "concern" not only about the accuracy of the White House transcripts but about the President's "judgment" in deleting what he considered irrelevant material.

One deletion that has come to light was a remark by the President on Sept. 15, 1972, that suggested The

Washington Post would have difficulties in renewing its television licenses because of the paper's Watergate coverage.

Rodino has also said information possessed by the committee indicates that a presidential conversation concerning possible White House involvement in Watergate was deleted from the transcript of a March 17, 1973, tape.

If so, this would indicate Mr. Nixon knew something about the cover-up four days before March 21, the date he claimed he was first told by then-White House counsel John W. Dean III. Rodino's attempts to check the original tape of the March 17 talk have produced no response, except an invitation for Rodino and Hutchinson to go to the White House and listen to it. This he refused to do.

The Judiciary Committee spent a seventh session be-

hind closed doors yesterday as Doar's staff presented evidence it has assembled on Watergate and the President's involvement. No tape were played.

Rodino said the committee will hold one more closed session on Watergate next Wednesday. Later in the week it will meet to consider its response to Mr. Nixon's defiance of its subpoena. Then it will move on to hear evidence of other allegations against the President, some of them in public sessions. These include allegations that the President raised milk price supports and settled an International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. antitrust suit in exchange for pledges of campaign contributions.

Rodino said he is opposed and believes a majority of

the committee is opposed to going to court to seek help in enforcing its subpoena against the President. Rodino believes the courts have no constitutional role in impeachment and that the committee should proceed with its inquiry and let members draw their own inferences from the President's refusal to comply. This could be carried to the point of making his refusal a separate impeachable offense.

The committee is united in the belief that it has a right to the tapes and that the President should not be the judge of what evidence the committee should have in its impeachment inquiry. However, Rep. David Dennis (R-Ind.) said the committee could obtain the evidence by calling participants in the tapes' conversations to testify as to what was said. This will be considered at next week's meeting.