

RODINO UNIT VOTES EARLY DISCLOSURE OF MOST EVIDENCE

Material Will Cover 18 Days
of Committee Hearings on
Nixon Conduct in Office

PANEL DIVIDES, 22 TO 16

Highly Classified Papers on
the Bombing of Cambodia
Are to Be Withheld

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WASHINGTON, June 25—

The House Judiciary Committee decided today, despite bitter and bipartisan dissent, to make public as soon as possible virtually all the evidence assembled for its investigation of President Nixon's conduct in office.

By a vote of 22 to 16, the committee agreed to publish, perhaps beginning next week, most of the estimated 7,800 pages of evidence presented in 18 days of closed hearings on possible impeachment of the President. The hearings ended last Friday.

The committee specifically excluded, however, highly classified testimony related to the secret bombing of Cambodia and gave to its two senior members the discretion to delete other, unspecified material before publication. They are Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr., Democrat of New Jersey, the chairman, and Edward Hutchinson of Michigan, the ranking Republican.

White House View

The White House issued a statement saying, "We applaud the action of the committee in moving these hearings to a conclusion. They are finally making information from the House Judiciary Committee, which has been meeting behind a closed doors for seven weeks."

Representative Wayne Owens, Democrat of Utah, who sponsored the proposal to release the evidence, said that a committee majority had agreed with his contention that the "public has a right to know" the basis on which the President's conduct would be judged.

The White House had urged release of the evidence. But Republicans and Democrats who tried in vain to prevent the disclosure described the decision as a travesty of justice for both Mr. Nixon and defendants in forthcoming criminal trials related to the Watergate case.

Inquiry Held 'Objective'

"History will show this was not a very tidy process, with due process not afforded the President and defendants in public trials," Representative Don Edwards, Democrat of California, told reporters after the vote at a closed meeting.

Representative Charles E. Wiggins, Republican of California, called the decision "a grievous mistake which historically is going to indict our committee."

Mr. Rodino hailed the decision. He said that all the evidence had been part of an "ob-

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jective" presentation by the impeachment inquiry staff and that it was "in the public interest that it be in the hands of the public" before the committee began debate on whether to recommend that Mr. Nixon be impeached.

Material that Mr. Nixon's chief defense attorney, James D. St. Clair, will present to the committee later this week will also be part of the published record, the committee chairman said.

Mr. Rodino told reporters after the decision was made at a closed meeting that he could not predict how soon the evidence would be published. He said that it would depend on how quickly it could be reproduced by the Government Printing Office and that it might be published in segments.

Other members said it was their understanding, however, that some of the evidence might be released as early as next week.

The evidence to be published is a compilation of material bearing on possible Presidential misconduct obtained from grand juries, the Internal Revenue Service, the Senate Watergate committee and other Congressional panels, and interviews conducted by the impeachment inquiry staff.

The material was presented to the committee members, in hearings that began May 9, reportedly without interpretation or coloration by the inquiry staff.

The decision to publish the evidence followed what was said to have been a bruising debate in the committee.

A bipartisan coalition, composed of 16 Democrats and six Republicans who insisted that the public should see the evidence, overrode objections from three separate blocs whose arguments were reportedly intertwined in the debate.

One group, including Representative Barbara Jordan, Democrat of Texas, and Mr. Edwards, argued that release of the material would violate the vicil rights of third parties who either faced trial in the Watergate matter or might be defamed by some evidence.

A second group, mostly Republicans, was said to have contended that the committee should keep all the evidence confidential except what would be eventually published to support proposed impeachment charges against the President.

The third bloc was composed of Southern Democrats who reportedly voiced concern to colleagues that publication of the evidence alone, without interpretation of it, might not be enough to persuade their constituents that it constituted grounds for impeachment. Three Southern Democrats, James R. Mann of South Carolina and Ray Thornton of Arkansas—voted against the disclosure.

Miss Jordan said in an interview that she had told the committee that she agreed "the public does have a right to know." But she said she had added, "the public wants answers—Here is my answer and here is the evidence to support it."

Miss Jordan said it was "irresponsible" to violate the rights of third parties, individuals not directly involved in the impeachment proceeding.

Mr. Wiggins, who has become the President's most articulate defender on the Judiciary Committee, told reporters that he had opposed the publication of evidence because it would increase political pressure on the panel.

"We should make our vote based on the evidence and the law," he said, "and not the kind of pressure the committee is going to be under the moment that evidence is released."

He added that the news media and critics of Mr. Nixon would analyze the unalloyed evidence and "hit the committee right over the head" with it.

Democrats said that colleagues who represented Southern Congressional districts where there was outspoken support for Mr. Nixon were

concerned that they could not maintain an open mind on the evidence if it was released and Southern constituents concluded that it contained no "bombshells."

Mr. Edwards said that release of the evidence would "embarrass the President without contributing anything to impeachment."

But Mr. Owens countered to reporters that the most sensitive material had already been leaked to the news media. He added that "if there is any embarrassment to the President it will be nothing like the embarrassment he brought on himself by the public release" of the edited White House transcripts of Mr. Nixon's Watergate conversations.

At a news conference this afternoon, Mr. Rodino and Representative Robert McClory, Republican of Illinois, were vague about precisely what materials would be deleted from the record of evidence before it was published.

The motion approved by the committee specifies that the entire record be published except for the Cambodia material and "such deletions as have been agreed to by the chairman and ranking minority member."

Mr. Rodino noted that he and the ranking Republican, Mr. Hutchinson, had "wide discretion under the motion." He pledged only that all material that was "necessary and relevant to the inquiry" would be published.