

World news in brief

Compiled by Tom Sawyer
Wire Editor

Lawyers see no need to question Nixon

WASHINGTON—White House Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said Thursday that President Nixon's lawyers do not believe it is necessary for the FBI to question Nixon personally about the 18 and one half minute gap on a Watergate tape. The FBI was ordered into the case after a panel of experts testified in federal court that the subpoenaed tape had been manually erased, probably while in White House custody.

Egypt to re-open Suez Canal

Government officials in Cairo said Thursday Egypt will start clearing the Suez Canal in March and will follow up immediately with development of the waterway to accommodate bigger ships with the financial help of the United States and other countries.

Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan said he expected Egypt to carry out its part of the military disengagement accord with Israel and go on to reopen the Suez Canal.

Oil ban may be lifted soon

WASHINGTON—Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger said Thursday he believes the Arab oil embargo will be lifted in late February or early March, congressional sources reported.

"What is news is that the lifting of the embargo will be recommended by several of the oil-producing countries," Kissinger told reporters after he met privately for two hours with the House Ways and Means Committee.

South Carolina raises racket

COLUMBIA, S.C.—A resolution to challenge the Houses of North Carolina and Georgia to a tennis match was approved Thursday by the South Carolina House of Representatives.

"Such an event would afford an opportunity for the members of each House to meet and exchange ideas and information."

House committee threatens Nixon

WASHINGTON—The House Judiciary Committee declared Thursday that President Nixon can be held in contempt of Congress if he refuses to surrender evidence or appear before the panel investigating grounds for impeachment.

Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr., D-N.J., said Nixon's refusal to furnish materials which might be subpoenaed would be "grounds for impeachment" in itself. If the President uses the claim of executive privilege, the House can cite him for contempt, Rodino said.

Apparently unswayed by President

Nixon's statement in his State of the Union address Wednesday that "one year of Watergate is enough," the 37 committee members approved a subpoena power resolution by voice vote and sent it to the House floor. The House was expected to pass it next Tuesday.

The only partisan differences were over Republican attempts to set April 30 as a cut-off date for the impeachment inquiry. Democrats won that battle on a 23-14 vote.

The resolution ignored Nixon's statement that "I will cooperate in any way that I consider consistent with my responsibilities

for the office of the presidency of the United States."

It seeks a mandate from the House to carry on with its inquiry into grounds for impeachment, along with unlimited subpoena power. The original draft, by special counsel John M. Doar, referred to "full, original and unqualified power," but that phrase was omitted.

In the committee's first open meeting since it was assigned last October to inquire into impeachment, Rodino said the powers the committee is seeking "do not depend on any statutory provision or judicial enforcement."

The resolution read: "For the purpose of making such investigation, the committee is authorized to require, by subpoena or otherwise, the attendance and testimony of any person including that of a taking of a deposition by counsel for the committee and the production of such things; and by interrogatory, the furnishing of such information as it deems necessary to such investigation."

Rep. Jerome R. Waldie, D-Calif., author of one of several impeachment resolutions, asked if that meant the President could be compelled to appear.

Doar replied, "The powers are that broad, yes."

Rodino, asked later if the committee would call Nixon, replied: "If it became

necessary for the completion of the inquiry, that certainly would be a possibility—especially to assure a fair judgment."

He acknowledged, however, that the resolution would not supersede anything in the Constitution, including the Fifth Amendment guarantee against self-incrimination.

Truck strike begins

Thousands of independent truckers pulled off the nation's highways Thursday to start what was billed as a nationwide stoppage that was marked by a death, a kidnapping and other violence.

The stoppage to protest high fuel prices appeared to take firm hold only in heavily industrialized states of Ohio and Pennsylvania. Outbreaks of gunfire, rock throwing and beatings were reported in the two states despite escorts by heavily armed police.

Some interstate trucking outfits warned drivers to stay off Ohio and Pennsylvania highways.

Elsewhere in the country groups of drivers—they appeared to total no more than several hundred—parked their rigs and went home or milled around truck stops in New Jersey, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, New Mexico and Connecticut.

Prosecutors have found 'no evidence' Dean lied

WASHINGTON—Special prosecutors reported Thursday they have no evidence that John W. Dean III lied when he linked President Nixon to the Watergate coverup. The White House said it stands by declarations of presidential innocence.

The prosecutors broke long-standing silence on speculation Dean, the former White House counsel, might be charged with perjury at a pretrial hearing for former Nixon aide Dwight L. Chapin, at which Dean was expected to appear as a government witness.

Jacob A. Stein, Chapin's lawyer, said his client was entitled to know if the government

had evidence that Dean had lied, "even in matters extraneous to this case."

Assistant special prosecutor Richard J. Davis replied "so far as the government is concerned, based on evidence we have now, we have no basis for believing Mr. Dean committed perjury in any proceeding."

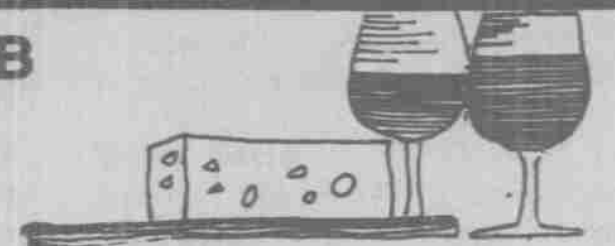
Davis added that "we would have no basis ... for bringing any charge of perjury against Mr. Dean."

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