

Kennedy Weighs 'Spy' Probe

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By Karlyn Barker

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) is considering holding public hearings by his own subcommittee into alleged political espionage activities by Republicans, and he has won approval from the subcommittee's Democratic majority to subpoena witnesses.

In a letter to the seven members of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure (which he heads) Kennedy said preliminary inquiries now being conducted by his subcommittee staff "will continue during the (congressional) recess, but no decision will be made to move to public proceedings without consultation among us."

The senator's letter did not mention any timetable for the hearings, but sources on Capitol Hill said it is unlikely they would be held before the Nov. 7 election.

A footnote to the Kennedy letter, which was written Oct. 12, said Democratic Sens. John V. Tunney, of California, Quentin N. Burdick of North Dakota, Birch Bayh of Indiana, and Philip A. Hart of Michigan, all members of the



SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY
... no timetable

subcommittee, have approved his intention to issue subpoenas.

"My present intention is to authorize subpoenas . . . only to those persons who are likely to have knowledge of facts relevant to the authorization, financing, direction, control, operation, products, beneficiaries, participants, methods and results of the alleged bugging and wiretapping and related political espionage and sabotage activities, and to the practices and procedures of

the various agencies and officials in their investigation of such activities, Kennedy's letter said.

Support by the Democratic members of the Subcommittee gives Kennedy the authority to go ahead with a public investigation should he choose to, but the full Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sen. James O. Eastland, D-Miss., or the full Senate could vote to stop the Subcommittee actions.

Kennedy said in his letter that the list of witnesses for any Subcommittee inquiry "would not include any of the seven defendants named in the outstanding (Watergate) criminal indictments."

Yesterday, Sen. Edward J. Gurney (R-Fla.) threatened to call a meeting of the full Judiciary Committee if Kennedy goes ahead with a Subcommittee investigation.

Gurney called the Kennedy inquiry "a partisan political attempt to keep the Watergate affair alive" and said he did not think the Subcommittee has authority "to investigate charges and countercharges in a political campaign."

A spokesman for another Republican on the Subcommittee, Sen. Charles McC. Ma-

thias of Maryland, said Mathias "is not characteristically opposed to a congressional investigation but he does feel that a lot of jurisdictional questions have to be ironed out."

Kennedy's letter was sent to Subcommittee members the same day that Rep. Wright Patman (D-Tex.) chairman of the House Banking and Currency Committee, failed in his attempt to launch his own investigation into the Watergate incident and related matters.

While campaigning yesterday in Salt Lake City, however, Kennedy said his inquiry action was not triggered by any special developments but was done "as an orderly way of proceeding."

He said the Subcommittee staff will continue to develop its investigation "but before we hold public hearings I will notify them (the other Subcommittee members) and the decision will be theirs. It will not be an individual decision."

Patman said he was pleased that Kennedy has decided to conduct his own inquiry.

"This case is certainly widespread enough to warrant investigation by several congressional committees," said Patman.