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Ehrlichman, Haldeman to Talk of Roles

Washington

H. R. Haldeman, the White House chief of staff, and John D. Ehrlichman, President Nixon's top domestic adviser, will meet with federal prosecutors this week to discuss their possible roles in the Watergate break-in and its subsequent cover-up, sources close to the case said yesterday.

The sources said that arrangements for the meeting, expected in mid-week, had been quietly worked out during conferences between John J. Wilson, the attorney for the White House aides, and Earl J. Silbert, the chief government prosecutor.

No subpoena or invitation has been issued for the appearance of Haldeman and Ehrlichman before the grand jury, the sources said. Preliminary meetings such as the one to be held with Silbert usually precede formal testimony.

Wilson refused to comment on the report.

The summoning of Haldeman and Ehrlichman to the meeting with Silbert is the first formal sign that they are under investigation by the grand jury, although there have been repeated newspaper reports to that effect.

Haldeman is known to be under inquiry to determine whether his office had a role in the initial bugging operation or in any subsequent attempts to obstruct the investigation.

Ehrlichman was cited by L. Patrick Gray III, who resigned Friday as acting director of the FBI, as being present at a meeting 11 days after the Watergate break-in at which Gray as handed a file containing documents belonging to one of the Watergate participants and strongly urged, in effect, to make sure that they "never see the light of day."

Gray is expected to testify soon before the grand jury, but he has told friends that he will not be able to say that he was explicitly "ordered" to destroy the files.

The Washington Post reported yesterday that White House counsel John W. Dean "intends to swear under oath" that he was ordered by Haldeman and Ehrlichman to coordinate the cover-up after the June break-in and reported regularly on its progress to his superiors. The Post, citing White House sources, said that Mr. Nixon and his advisers were now attempting to devise a strategy that would offset the Dean charges.

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