

Senate Inquiry's Effect on Trials Studied

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WASHINGTON, June 1—The staff of the Senate Watergate committee is studying the question of how its full-scale airing of the scandal might affect criminal trials growing out of the case.

The study was undertaken following an informal meeting Wednesday night between the special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, and Samuel Dash, chief counsel for the Senate panel.

Among many topics, they discussed what Mr. Cox called "the risk of serious damage to investigations and any resulting prosecution and the various ways of reducing the harm."

The committee is scheduled to resume its public hearings at 10 A.M. Tuesday. Its chairman, Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, has said that bringing the entire matter before the American public is more important than sending a few men to prison. Most of the other Senators on the seven-man committee agree with Mr. Ervin.

Since Mr. Cox's appointment two weeks ago to head the criminal phase of Watergate, he has been wrestling with the problem. He has told friends he wants to lay the facts before the public and at the same time limit those facts so that he does not damage criminal trials with prejudicial pretrial publicity.

Such prosecutions could

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Associated Press

Archibald Cox, special prosecutor, speaking yesterday

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come within 60 to 90 days, the United States Attorney's office for the District of Columbia announced this week.

After Wednesday's meeting, Mr. Dash briefed the staff men for the seven Senators. The staff members said he told them of the general topics discussed and suggested to some that they do research on the question of the conflict between the criminal prosecution and the Senate hearings.

The Washington Post reported today that Mr. Cox had asked that the Senate hearings be stopped lest they interfere with the criminal prosecution. It also reported that Mr. Cox would consider court action if the hearings were not halted.

Mr. Cox and Mr. Dash both denied the report, as did James Vorenberg, Mr. Cox's assistant, who attended the meeting.

Mr. Cox said the talks were "for the purpose of exploring, in preliminary fashion, relationships between the select committee and the investigations in my charge."

He said they covered the topic of immunity for witnesses as well as the possible damage to the prosecution from the hearings.

"There was no mention whatsoever and I have never considered for a moment" court action to have the hearings stopped, he said.

He said that if he had any important requests to make they would be made to Senator Ervin.

Mr. Cox also promised to give "full cooperation" to a Los Angeles grand jury's investigation of the break-in at the office of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.