

WXPost JUN 19 1973  
**Panel Cites  
 Brezhnev's  
 Visit Here**

By Lawrence R. Meyer  
 and Spencer Rich

Washington Post Staff Writers

The Senate select Watergate committee voted yesterday to postpone its hearings this week while President Nixon conducts a summit conference with Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev.

The committee voted 6-1 yesterday to wait until next week to hear public testimony from former White House counsel John W. Dean III, who is expected to testify that President Nixon knew about the Watergate cover-up. The committee agreed to postpone the hearings at the request of Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) and Minority Leader Hugh Scott (R-Pa.).

In a letter to Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), committee chairman, Mansfield and Scott said, "It is our considered judgment that a delay of one week would not jeopardize the hearings, and that one week might give President Nixon and Mr. Brezhnev the opportunity to reconcile differences, arrive at mutual agreements, and, in the field of foreign policy, be able to achieve results which would be beneficial not only to our two countries but, hopefully, to all mankind."

Ervin, who said he was agreeing with the request of Mansfield and Scott "with some degree of reluctance," told a press conference, "I can see why the President's attention might be distracted by the Watergate investigation when he's trying to negotiate arms limitation agreements."

Ervin told a reporter later that he had received calls from "several senators" asking him to postpone the hearings. "I debated myself without reaching any conclusion," Ervin said, adding that the letter from Mansfield and Scott tipped the balance. "I'm doing it simply because I wouldn't want to assume responsibility for jeopardizing the summit talks," Ervin said.

Other senators were quick to applaud the action. The lone dissenter on the committee was Sen. Lowell P. Wicker Jr. (R-Conn.), who said after

the committee's vote, "I feel strongly that whereas the Brezhnev visit is very important, this exercise in democ-

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racy is important also. I don't see why the two can't go along forward together."

Weicker said, and a source close to the committee confirmed, that a prime consideration of the committee was the appearance that the hearings would give the American public of trying to "embarrass" Mr. Nixon while General-Secretary Brezhnev is here. The question of hearings being held while Brezhnev was here first came up several weeks ago in committee discussions, according to one member, but no decision was made.

Mansfield told the Senate yesterday that he had personally initiated the request to the committee to postpone its hearings until Brezhnev leaves. "I am personally responsible for asking the Republican leader to come to my office to discuss" the postponement, Mansfield said.

"I just want the record to show that I was the one responsible for initiating this request and that before doing so, I had no contact whatsoever with anyone, anywhere, within this city or without," Mansfield said.

A spokesman for Scott said that Mansfield phoned Scott at 2:15 p.m. yesterday with a request that he meet Mansfield "immediately" on a matter of the highest importance. Scott then broke off a meeting he was having with two visitors, the spokesman said, and made the two-minute walk to Mansfield's office.

Mansfield then proposed to Scott that they ask Ervin to delay the hearings until the summit talks are over. Scott agreed.

Sen. Howard H. Baker (R-Tenn.), the ranking minority member of the committee, said after the committee vote that the postponement "should not imply and is not meant to imply that the Dean testimony means much or little." Baker said that committee's action means simply that "the better part of discretion is not to take a chance."

Several published accounts indicate, however, that Dean's

testimony—if believed—could be damaging to President Nixon. In an interview published yesterday in The Washington Evening Star-News, Dean said, "I think they will believe me because I've got the facts—and the documents, papers the President sent to me and papers I sent the President."

"I don't look forward to doing it," Dean said. "It's a hard thing to point a finger at the President and wash all that dirty linen in public. But I talked to some older, wiser men in the Republican Party, some of them good friends of the President, and they advised me to tell everything I know."

The Washington Post reported yesterday that Mr. Nixon is expected to defend himself against increasing allegations of his involvement in the Watergate cover-up by saying that he was misled by his former principal deputies, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, according to White House and other government sources.

Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), one of the senators who favored the postponement of the hearings, said yesterday, "I support the committee 100 per cent. How can the President be responding to Dean and negotiate with Brezhnev at the same time? It's that simple." Jackson said that it is a "fair assumption that with Dean testifying, the President would have to respond."

Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.) said the committee's action was "desirable." Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) called the action "statesmanlike and responsible."

Sen. Ernest F. Hollings (D-S.C.) said, "The proper concern this week is that our President appear in the best light. Whatever any witness has to say about Watergate can wait another week. We have one President to represent us in these talks and it is important that he speak for all of us. And we must make sure that he speaks from a position of strength. He can't

do this while testimony adverse to him is blaring over the nation's television screens all week."

As a member of the committee staff said, "We were appealed to by the majority and minority leaders that it was in the national interest to postpone the hearings. We felt that we have a mandate to go ahead. It became a question of balancing interests. Of course, we're very let down."

High White House officials were known to have been deeply concerned over the hearings being held during Brezhnev's visit.

These officials did not try to hide their unhappiness over Dean's testifying publicly against Mr. Nixon while he was conferring with the Soviet party leader.

The officials insisted they had made no representation to the Senate committee to postpone the hearings. But they did not hesitate to speak privately of their dissatisfaction over having sensational charges against Mr. Nixon aired while he was negotiating with Brezhnev.

Ervin announced yesterday that White House counsel Leonard Garment had informed the committee that the White House would not raise the issue of attorney-client privilege or executive privilege concerning Dean's testimony. The invocation of either privilege could have been an obstacle to Dean's full testimony.

Chief committee counsel Samuel Dash said he received a call yesterday from Garment and was told that Mr. Nixon was waiving the privileges. Dash said that Dean, in his first interview with the full committee staff under oath on Saturday, had asked that certain questions be withheld until the issue of privilege was resolved.

In addition, Dash said that Garment had told him that matters of national security, regarding nine documents that Dean had turned over to the committee, were to be decided by the committee. Dash said that Garment had told him that White House counsel would not be present while

the committee questions Dean because President Nixon "did not want to interpose obstacles by the White House in the committee hearings."