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Senators Bid Saxbe Aid Jaworski's Independence

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WASHINGTON, May 22—The Senate Judiciary Committee told Attorney General William B. Saxbe today that he should "use all reasonable and appropriate means to guarantee the independence" of Leon Jaworski, the special Watergate prosecutor.

The committee statement, delivered to Mr. Saxbe in a letter late this afternoon, came in further response to Mr. Jaworski's complaint on Monday that President Nixon was attempting to undercut his authority.

Yesterday the committee adopted a resolution of support for Mr. Jaworski.

A spokesman for Mr. Saxbe said the Attorney General would respond to the letter quickly, probably tomorrow. In answer to a question, the spokesman said Mr. Saxbe "still subscribes" to his promise to the committee last winter to "fight for (Mr. Jaworski's) right to proceed as he sees fit."

Mr. Jaworski is, technically a subordinate of Mr. Saxbe in the Department of Justice.

The committee letter, which Senator Eastland said represented the unanimous view of the committee members, was apparently an attempt to insure that Mr. Saxbe would fulfill the promises that the committee won from him during his confirmation hearings.

Mr. Saxbe said then that he would refuse to obey any improper attempts by the President either to dismiss the special prosecutor or to limit his authority.

One Democrat on the committee, Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, spoke out on the Senate floor today to voice additional concern over Mr. Jaworski's complaint of interference by the President.

Mr. Byrd charged that President Nixon had violated the

"assurances that have repeatedly been made to the Senate Judiciary Committee, that the special prosecutor would have full independence in pressing legal proceedings when the special prosecutor concluded that it was necessary to do so."

Another Senator, Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois, also a Democrat, proposed legislation that would permit a panel of local Federal judges to appoint an interim special prosecutor should the office become vacant.

According to Mr. Stevenson, the legislation would "deter the President from dismissing the special prosecutor because he is doing his job too well."

The incident that led to the day's developments was the disclosure by Judge John J. Sirica on Monday of a legal brief filed by the President's chief defense counsel, James D. St. Clair.

The brief, filed during the closed proceedings over the special prosecution's subpoena of tapes and other records of 64 White House conversations, contended in effect that Mr. Jaworski could not pursue in court his attempt to obtain Presidential records.

Judge Sirica strongly rebuked Mr. Nixon on Monday for that argument, saying it was an attempt to "abridge" the special prosecutor's independence in violation of both law and the President's own assurances.

He called the argument a "nullity" and ordered Mr. Nixon to comply with the subpoena—an order that the White House has said it would appeal.

Mr. Jaworski subsequently notified the committee of the White House position, charging that the argument would make a "farce" of the charter outlining the prosecutor's right and duties.