Court Defers Grand Jury Data Ruling

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WASHINGTON, June 24— The Supreme Court postponed for two weeks today a ruling on whether the Justices should inspect the Watergate grand jury's records to help them decide if the jurors could name President Nixon as an unindicted co-conspirator.

In a one-sentence order raising more questions than it answered, the Justices said that the White House motion to look behind the grand jury indictment would be "deferred to the hearing of the cases on the merits," which will take place July 8.

A number of attorneys and Court observers had expected the high court to reject the motion made by James D. St. Clair, Mr. Nixon's chief defense attorney, last week.

Courts very rarely examine grand jury minutes and evidence to test their sufficiency.

The postponed decision appeared to represent a compromise between rejecting on the spot the President's proposal for further examination of grand jury records and agreeing to add the legal issue to the two Watergate questions the high court has agreed to decide.

Already on the agenda for the July arguments are the questions of whether the President must surrender 64 White House tape recordings for possible use in the Watergate cover-up trial and whether the grand jury had the authority to name Mr. Nixon as an unindicted co-conspirator.

By postponing consideration of the St. Clair motion until July 8, the Court appeared to reduce the likelihood that the Justices would seek access to the grand jury records since such investigation would presumably further extend the period of their deliberation after the formal hearing.

Some lawyers interpreted the Court's action as a combination of formal courtesy to the President and unwillingness to indicate the least sort of predisposition against the White House case in advance by officially rejecting any request made on Mr Nixon's behalf.

The order left the door open, however, to the possibility that the Justices, after they hear the special Watergate prosecutor Leon Jaworski, and Mr. St. Clair on July 8, will call for the grand jury records and examine them as part of reaching a final decision on the merits.