

## Watergate Case

MAR 17 1973

# Nixon, Senators Compromise on FBI 'Raw' Files

### Washington

The Nixon administration and the Senate select committee probing the Watergate bugging case reached a compromise yesterday that Senator Sam Ervin (Dem-N.C.) said would allow the committee the "full benefits" of the FBI's Watergate investigation.

Sources close to the committee said that the compromise, details of which were not publicly announced, would allow the two top staff members of the investigating committee access to the FBI raw files on the Watergate case. But the only Senators on the seven-member committee who will be permitted to see the files are chairman Ervin and Senator Howard Baker (Rep-Tenn.), the ranking minority member.

The President said at a news conference Thursday "that the practice of the FBI furnishing raw files to full committees must stop." He said he did not object to showing these files to the committee chairman and the ranking minority member.

### OBJECTION

Ervin objected, however, that this procedure would make it difficult for him to proceed with the investigation.

"It would take days to go through those files," Ervin said. "I don't have the time. The staff has to do it."

The resolution establishing the Senate select committee, passed unanimously by the Senate, grants all seven Senators and the two staff members access to the files.

Both the administration

and the committee backed down from their original positions in negotiations among Attorney General Richard Kleindienst, Ervin and Baker.

The administration, while remaining adamant on withholding the files from the full committee, agreed to allow their inspection by Samuel Dash, the staff director and majority counsel, and Fred Thompson, the minority counsel. Both will be strictly sworn to secrecy.

### STATEMENT

The agreement, Ervin and Baker said in a joint statement, will give the committee "the full benefit of the results of the FBI investigation concerning the Watergate incident and other matters related to the 1972 presidential campaign."

Hours before the compromise was announced, White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler indicated that acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray would be expected to withdraw his offer to allow the full Senate Judiciary Committee to inspect the Watergate files.

Citing the President's statement of the day before, Ziegler said "individuals in the government traditionally take guidance from what the President says."

### OFFER

Gray offered the files to the full judiciary committee last week during hearings on his confirmation as FBI director.

Only two senators have actually inspected them, Senator Roman Hruska (Rep-Neb.), who spent more than six hours looking at files, and Senator John Tunney (Dem-Calif.), who inspected three specific files

for a half hour.

While reiterating the President's opposition to Senate inspection of raw FBI files, Ziegler also promised administration cooperation with both committees and hinted at one point that a written report by White House counsel John W. Dean III on the Watergate case might be made available.

The President has refused to allow Dean to testify before the judiciary committee but Ziegler has said that he will answer "relevant" questions in writing. Dean has not yet been asked to testify by the Ervin committee.

### ANSWER

Asked whether Dean's written report on the Watergate case would be made available to the Senate committees, Ziegler declined to answer specifically but said "the objective of the administration will be to cooperate and provide the facts and provide relevant information and details that the committees want."

President Nixon maintained at his Thursday news conference that he was upholding the traditional constitutional doctrine of separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches in declining to allow his aides to testify. He defended withholding of the FBI files on grounds they contained hearsay that "could do innocent people a great deal of damage."

*Washington Post Service*