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Watergate Case

Senate Pursues McCord Charge

Washington

Convicted conspirator James W. McCord Jr. was summoned yesterday to testify under oath today before a special Senate investigation about his charges that two presidential assistants were implicated in the Watergate bugging scandal.

Senator Howard H. Baker Jr., (Rep-Tenn.) vice chairman of the Watergate Investigating Committee, said the members voted to invite McCord and his attorney, Bernard Fensterwald, to meet with them in a closed session to divulge all his knowledge of the bugging and break-in of the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee last June.

He said it would be "a full, thorough interview" in preparation for public hearings, expected to start in May.

McCord, former security chief for President Nixon's re-election campaign, already has told committee investigators that White House counsel John W. Dean III and Jeb Stuart Magruder, former presidential and Nixon campaign officials, had prior knowledge of the bugging. They were not among seven defendants tried in federal court.

Baker refused to say what the committee would ask McCord, but the interview is certain to focus on Dean and Magruder. He said McCord would be "fully subject to the penalties of perjury" if he did not tell the truth.

Senate sources said McCord refused to talk to anyone but the committee members after the information about Dean and Magruder was leaked by committee investigators to the news media.

McCord earlier said he was afraid to talk to the FBI or the Justice Department about others involved in the case because the information would be passed immediately to the White House. McCord also will tell what he knows later this week to federal Judge John J. Sirica, who will sentence him.

McCord and G. Gordon Liddy former finance counsel to the Committee to Re-elect the President, were convicted on burglary and conspiracy charges in the Watergate case. Five others charged all pleaded guilty.

White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said earlier that on the basis of a telephone conversation between the President and Dean, "I will again flatly deny any prior knowledge on the part of Mr. Dean regarding the Watergate matter."

The president also expressed through a spokesman "absolute and total confidence" in Dean who has figured prominently in the Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearings on L. Patrick Gray to be FBI director.

Senator Norris Cotton of New Hampshire, chairman of the GOP Conference Committee, and Senator John Tower of Texas, head of the Republican Policy Committee, urged Mr. Nixon to rescind his invocation of executive privilege and let Dean testify before the judiciary panel.

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