

Cox Unable to Stop

Senate on Hearings

Prosecutor Can't Block Ervin Probe

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — The government's new special prosecutor in the Watergate case, Archibald Cox, sought and failed this week to get the Senate's hearings on the scandal called off, it was reported today.

Cox was said to have made the request out of concern that the public hearings would inhibit future prosecution of persons accused in the case.

Citing Senate sources as the origin of the report, the Washington Post said Cox apparently passed on the request to the chief counsel of the special Senate Watergate committee, Samuel Dash, and Dash rejected it.

The Post said one of its sources said Cox did not ask that the hearings simply be suspended but that they be halted completely. Dash was said to have told him, "That would be impossible."

Meanwhile, some of the present and former top officials in government are telling very different stories about their mutual connections with the Watergate scandal.

'Gestapo Mentality'

And Sen. Sam Ervin (D-N.C.), chairman of the Watergate committee, says he has read secret White House documents that disclose a "Gestapo mentality" existed at the highest levels of the Nixon administration.

Since the disclosure several weeks ago that the Central Intelligence Agency may have been pressed into Watergate-related service, a number of congressional watchdog committees have launched separate, secret inquiries into the activities of America's official espionage agency.

White House Vs. CIA

The resulting testimony

has pitted former top White House aides against the highest echelons of the CIA and FBI.

As related by some of the officials themselves and by members of various committees, here are some of the conflicts that have shown up in recent sworn testimony behind closed doors:

- Gen. Robert Cushman, former deputy director of the CIA and now commandant of the Marine Corps, said John Ehrlichman asked him by phone on July 7, 1971, for CIA assistance to E. Howard Hunt, since convicted in the Watergate conspiracy.

Ehrlichman, then President Nixon's domestic affairs adviser, said he never made the request, told Cushman so and the general

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deleted his name from a memo recounting the incident.

Cushman said yesterday that he has since checked his records and reaffirmed that Ehrlichman was the caller, adding: "I do not regard Mr. Ehrlichman's position and mine as being necessarily contradictory."

- Ehrlichman, presidential chief of staff H. R. Haldeman, CIA Director Richard Helms and Helms' deputy, Army Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters, met at the

White House June 23, 1972, to discuss the CIA and the break-in six days earlier at Democratic headquarters in the Watergate.

Helms and Walters said the CIA wasn't involved in Watergate and that the FBI's investigation of the incident wouldn't hurt the agency or compromise any of its other covert activities.

Went to See Gray

Walters said the White House officials, since resigned, sent him to see acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray III to tell him the FBI's Watergate-related investigation of a Mexican money deal could jeopardize CIA operations.

The Mexican transaction involved the shifting through Mexico of \$89,000 in Nixon campaign donations which later were deposited in the bank account of one of the Watergate conspirators.

Ehrlichman said Helms and Walters didn't give "a flat assurance" that the CIA wouldn't be hurt by the FBI probe.

Haldeman said there was "no intent or desire to impede or cover up any aspect of the Watergate investigation itself."

Sen. John McClellan (D-Ark.), chairman of one of the subcommittees looking into the matter, said Haldeman and Ehrlichman were in substantial agreement with each other but their accounts were in "serious conflict" with the Helms, Walters and Gray versions of the White House meeting and subsequent Gray-Walters encounter.

- McClellan's counterpart on the other side of Congress, Rep. Lucien D. Nedzi (D-Mich.), said: "We have two versions under oath that are not consistent." He called for a Justice Department review of the testimony, which could lead to filing of perjury charges against one or more of the congressional witnesses.

- Both Ehrlichman and Haldeman blamed fired White House Counsel John Dean for reported efforts to get the CIA involved in the scandal. Dean has said a move is under way to discredit him before his testimony exposes other top people involved.

Ervin's comments at a news conference in Win-

ston-Salem, N.C., yesterday were the strongest he has made about the explosive issues uncovered by the broadening Watergate investigation.

The top-secret papers he was discussing surfaced when Dean told a federal judge he had taken them from the White House. The judge gave Ervin a copy. They are a blueprint for domestic espionage, but President Nixon said the plan was never implemented because the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, objected to it.

'A Great Shock'

"It would be a great shock to the American people" if the contents of the papers are made public, Ervin said, adding that he plans to ask the nation's intelligence agencies for their recommendations regarding release of the documents.

The Watergate committee chairman said the papers detail White House plans to set up "an interagency operation to spy on Americans, especially those who disagreed with the administration."

Sources close to the Watergate investigation have told reporters that such an operation was carried out many months after the plan was withdrawn on the heels of Hoover's objections.

The Gestapo, to which Ervin referred, was the secret state police that operated in Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler.