

# Sen. Ervin Plans Watergate Probe

By Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein  
Washington Post Staff Writers

Sen. Sam J. Ervin (D-N.C.) intends to subpoena some of President Nixon's top aides in the forthcoming Senate investigation into the Watergate bugging and an allegedly broader campaign of political espionage and sabotage against the Democrats, according to unnamed sources on Capitol Hill.

Ervin also intends to investigate the government's inquiry into the Watergate incident and related matters to determine if it was complete and impartial, the sources said.

It is known that this includes a detailed review of the manner in which the government's case has been prosecuted. Sources said that daily transcripts of the Watergate trial are being scrutinized by Ervin staff members.

Ervin, who will head the Senate's

investigation, is expected to be granted subpoena power to call anyone in the executive branch of the government other than the President himself, the sources reported.

It could not be learned which presidential aides might be called to testify. However, it is known that Ervin believes that any White House officials and presidential advisers who have been named in news accounts of alleged spying and disruption against the Democrats should be given a chance to have their names cleared.

If such aides do not testify voluntarily, the sources said, Ervin feels it is essential to force their testimony. Members of Ervin's staff are drafting a resolution that if passed by the Senate, would grant him the broadest subpoena powers.

Ervin is virtually assured of receiving Senate approval of the resolution,

the sources said, because the powerful Senate Democratic Policy Committee, the 14 member arm of the 57-member Senate Democratic majority, has promised it full backing.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) has said that the Watergate probe and accompanying public hearings may result in the first actual test of congressional power to force testimony from the President's closest assistants, should they claim executive privilege.

Presidential advisers from many administrations and both political parties have asserted at times that they have an executive privilege to not disclose to Congress confidential White House business. It is this tradition that the Senate Democratic majority has indicated it wants to challenge.

See ERYIN, A8, Col. 1

## ERVIN, From A1

On Jan. 16, Mansfield sent eight letters asking various government agencies to preserve all records that might be relevant to the Ervin investigation. The letters went to the White House, the Justice Department, the FBI, the General Accounting Office, the Republican National Committee, the Committee for the Re-election of the President, the President's campaign finance committee and Assistant U.S. Attorney Earl J. Silbert.

Sen. Ervin's staff has been working to determine what records are available. The staff has been told that the White House has a large amount of information on the Watergate incident, including the names of the bugged individuals and the names of the individuals who were involved in the operation. The staff has also been told that the White House has a large amount of information on the political espionage and sabotage operation as reported in news accounts.

One source close to Ervin said that the last area of inquiry meant that "we are going to investigate the investigators" to determine if there was any political influence

brought to bear on the conduct of the investigation by the FBI, the General Accounting Office, the Republican National Committee, the Committee for the Re-election of the President, the President's campaign finance committee and Assistant U.S. Attorney Earl J. Silbert.

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Ervin said that he has not fixed a date for public hearings, but that they would be held some time this year.

The staff of the Senate Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure, chaired by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), has been investigating the Watergate incident and related matters since Oct. 12. Kennedy has expressed reluctance to head the full-scale Senate investigation and recently agreed with Mansfield that an inquiry headed by Ervin would be less vulnerable to attack on political grounds. The information developed by Kennedy's staff, which has been subpoenaing records for three months, will be made available to Ervin.

Much of the information obtained by Kennedy's staff, according to reliable sources, deals with the question of White House involvement in the wider political espionage-sabotage operation as reported in news accounts.

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