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Nixon Ex-Aides Can't Copy Papers

Washington

The White House disclosed yesterday it decided in May that former presidential aides could no longer copy documents they worked on at the White House.

The question of access to White House papers is shaping up into a major element in various Watergate probes.

Quiet negotiations are underway between the White House and the special Watergate prosecutor's office to avoid a clash over whether

the prosecutor can obtain documents that President Nixon last week denied the Senate Watergate committee.

The committee rescheduled a meeting for today to discuss whether White House papers it wants for its probe should be subpoenaed.

Deputy White House press secretary Gerald L. Warren acknowledged that a clash could erupt with special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox on the documents issue. Cox has said that if the White House refuses to cooperate with his investigation he will denounce publicly any such lack of aid.

RULE

In response to questions, Warren said the rule against former aides copying documents went into effect May 23.

Two weeks ago, ousted White House Counsel John W. Dean III asked the Senate Watergate committee for help in getting White House permission to Xerox papers he worked on. Dean told the committee that he at one time had been allowed to copy documents in longhand.

There was no explanation for the delay in announcing the ground rules instituted in May. Press secretary

Ronald L. Ziegler told ^{7/12}newsmen as recently as Saturday that former aides to President Nixon such as Dean, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman could copy their official papers in longhand.

Yesterday, Warren cast the situation in an entirely different light. He told reporters, "They can come in and peruse papers on which they worked but they can't copy in any way . . . not even in notes."

GUARD

The files of Dean, Haldeman and Ehrlichman were placed under FBI guard on April 30, the day they left their key posts. The Secret Service subsequently assumed responsibility for guarding the files.

Warren said that between April 30 and May 23 the three men had the opportunity not only to consult their files but to make photo copies. Dean testified before the committee that he could not photo copy his documents.

The committee said then it would make an official request for the documents and for permission for Dean to make copies.

In a letter Saturday to committee chairman Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., (Dem-N.C.), Mr. Nixon said he would not appear before

Coverage Today on KPIX-TV

The Senate committee hearings on the Watergate scandal will be telecast today on KPIX-TV (Channel 5) beginning at 7 a.m.

The hearings will be rebroadcast at 8 p.m. on KQED-TV (Channel 9).

Live radio coverage will be provided by KCBS, KPFA-FM, and KQED-FM.

The hearings will be telecast tomorrow on KGO-TV (Channel 7).

the panel and would not supply documents. He claimed executive privilege and separation of powers.

Warren said the decision to bar copying of documents, even in longhand, was made by the office of acting White House counsel Leonard Garment with the concurrence of the President.

Asked the reason for the decision, he said it was "to protect the confidentiality of presidential files, not just for this president but for all presidents."

In response to a question, Warren said any former aides can have complete access to and remove any personal papers unrelated to their official work that they may have left behind.

Associated Press