

Committee Meets Today About Tapes

Washington

The showdown between the Senate Watergate committee and President Nixon over the committee's urgent request for tape recordings made in the President's office is expected to come today.

The committee is scheduled to meet in closed executive session at 9 a.m. Washington time, just before Gordon C. Strachan resumes public testimony before the committee. The committee expects to receive a presidential letter on the matter, which has been building in importance over the past weeks.

Last week, a White House aide said Mr. Nixon would not give Senate investigators access to the tapes.

The committee seeks not only the controversial tapes, but also a number of documents it believes may be related to the Watergate case.

The tapes and other documents may shed light on White House involvement or lack of it in planning the burglary of the Democratic party's national headquarters at the Watergate office building on June 17, 1972, and related events of political sabotage and espionage. The documents may also shed light on whether Mr. Nixon was involved in subsequent efforts to cover up the Watergate scandals.

Strachan, who was an aide to H. R. Haldeman, the former White House chief of staff, will be followed on the witness stand by John D. Ehrlichman, the President's former chief adviser for domestic affairs, Haldeman

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and Charles W. Colson, former special counsel to the President.

It was considered unlikely that Ehrlichman would be called to the stand before tomorrow.

The committee may not get to Haldeman and Colson this week, but hopes to wind up this phase of its hearings by August 3. A large number of other witnesses are scheduled to testify, but it is doubtful that the committee will be able to get to all of them before the recess date.

Gerald L. Warren, deputy White House press secretary, declined yesterday to discuss the President's re-

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sponse, even to say whether the presidential letter would reach committee members in time for its 9 a.m. executive session today.

Mr. Nixon spent the weekend at Camp David recuperating from an attack of viral pneumonia, and met there with aides to discuss the Watergate affair. Warren said Mr. Nixon was scheduled to be at the White House for a 10 a.m. appointment today.

Committee sources said they expect the committee to vote today to subpoena the tapes and documents if the White House does not turn them over voluntarily. A subpoena could cause a constitutional struggle over the right of a President to withhold information from Congress.

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