

Sirica Won't Consolidate Tape Cases

Washington

Chief U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica refused yesterday to consolidate the suits of the Senate Watergate committee and special prosecutor Archibald Cox to obtain President Nixon's secret Watergate tape recordings.

In a brief order with little elaboration, Sirica said he had considered the opinions of Cox and White House special counsel Charles A. Wright, both of whom opposed the consolidation.

The committee had asked Sirica to rule on the cases at the same time because "the public interests would better be served."

Cox, however said he does not want the grand jury to consider further indictments in the Watergate case until it knows whether it will have access to the tapes. He said the grand jury is under the pressure of facing an expiration date in December.

"It is fair to say that there is no comparable urgency in their (the committee's) suit," Cox said.

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