

# Rest of Watergate Inquiry Is Delayed and Shortened

## Sessions Put Off Until Sept. 24 and Cut to Three Days a Week—Nov. 1 Is Set as Target Date for Completion

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 12 —

The Senate Watergate committee decided today on a schedule of hearings that will sharply curtail its public inquiry into 1972 Presidential campaign sabotage and financing.

The Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities agreed, at a 75-minute closed meeting, to delay resumption of its Watergate hearings until Sept. 24, to limit the sessions to three days a week and to aim at Nov. 1 for completion of the investigation.

In announcing the schedule, Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, the chairman, and Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee, the ranking Republican, rejected suggestions that the committee was responding to pressure from the White House and Republican party leaders to terminate the hearings and turn over the Watergate matter to the courts.

Senator Ervin told reporters that the seven Senators believed they could expedite the hearings by focusing on "key witnesses" and "salient points" of testimony without going into "such detail that we won't be able to see the forest for the bushes and the trees."

Senator Baker added that there had been no consideration given to the political overtones of the investigation.

"The committee, as a committee, is determined to finish this thing promptly and thoroughly," Mr. Baker said. "And I think we are going to do just

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that. That happens to coincide with what I think the public wants, that is, to continue but to continue with as much dispatch as possible."

The schedule will mean that the panel, which spent 37 days looking into the Watergate break-in and cover-up before recessing the first phase of the hearings on Aug. 7, will have 18 hearing days to complete that phase of the inquiry and to examine witnesses on the second phase, political "dirty tricks," and the third, campaign contributions.

### Could Go on 'Forever'

Asked how the committee could expect to do a thorough job so quickly, Senator Ervin said that "You could carry this on forever, you know, until the last lingering echo of Gabriel's horn trembled into ultimate silence, if you want to go into all the campaign contributions."

He said that the Senators saw their function in the latter two phases of the inquiry as one of trying "to reveal the broad outlines" of what its investigators uncover.

The hearings had been scheduled tentatively to resume next week. There were reports from authoritative members of the committee staff that its investigators had been stymied in a cross-country search for new revelations about campaign sabotage attempts.

Senator Ervin, responding to a question about the reports, said that he had not heard of them. But he and Senator Baker said that the committee investigators had indicated they would "welcome" an additional week to gather information.

Senator Ervin attributed the delay in the resumption of hearings to the need for "some more investigation." Senator Baker noted that there was "a lot of traveling involved" in the inquiry and said that, furthermore, "it covers a wide variety of information far beyond the scope of a single event, as was the case in phase

one" of the hearings.

Another factor, cited privately by an authoritative official of the committee, was uncertainty about the availability of Charles W. Colson, the former White House special counsel who had been scheduled to be the first witness.

The committee source said that Mr. Colson's lawyers had informed the Senate panel that Mr. Colson was a principal "target" of a Federal grand jury looking into the September, 1971, burglary of the office of a California psychiatrist who treated Dr. Daniel Ellsberg. According to the official, Mr. Colson's lawyers said that if he were indicted he would refuse to testify before the committee.

The Senators were also said to have voted unanimously to grant limited immunity from prosecution to Donald H. Segratti, a principal figure in the alleged White House campaign to sabotage Democratic Presidential candidacies.

Three committee investigators traveled today to New Hampshire to interview some 20 potential witnesses about "dirty tricks" alleged to have occurred in that state's 1972 Presidential primary. Other staff members were said to be checking records of the Key Biscayne (Fla.) Bank and Trust Company, which is operated by President Nixon's close friend, Charles G. Rebozo.

The two senior members of the committee were surrounded by newsmen and television technicians when they emerged from the closed meeting near the Senate rotunda of the Capitol. The Senators answered questions standing three feet from a bronze plaque marking the spot where Thomas Jefferson delivered inaugural addresses in 1801 and 1805 and from which Aaron Burr once presided over the Senate.

### Tape Recordings Sought

Both Senators said that they remained determined to obtain access to White House tape recordings that President Nixon has refused to turn over to the committee, to the special Watergate prosecutor or to the Federal courts.

Senator Ervin said that the tapes were "crucial to the development of the full truth" about Watergate because tapes "in an unaltered state" would determine the validity of testimony by John W. Dean 3d, the former White House legal counsel, that President Nixon was a participant in the Watergate cover-up.

Senator Baker said that the committee would write a report for the Senate by Feb. 28 whether it gained access to the tapes or not, but he said the

tapes represented the "first and best evidence of certain critical encounters" and would "greatly enhance" the panel's efforts to determine the facts.

There had been some question whether the committee would resume without a national television audience. It has been pressed by Republican Senators Barry Goldwater of Arizona and Robert Dole of Kansas to bar television cameras from the hearing room.

Senator Baker said that while he was "in sympathy" with the attitude of Republican colleagues he was not in favor of their proposal.

The National Broadcasting Company said it might present live coverage of all or part of the hearings or possibly provide no hearings, depending upon the witness list. The American Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System said they were undecided about live coverage.

The networks said they had not decided whether to rotate coverage as they did in earlier hearings.

The National Public Affairs Center for Television, which fed live coverage of the first round of Watergate hearings to Eastern public TV stations, said it would not do it this time. It will only videotape the hearings for replay at night.

Senator Ervin was asked to respond to a suggestion by Senator Goldwater that he engage in a Watergate debate with President Nixon. Mr. Ervin laughed and replied:

"Well, if he challenges me, I'll accept."