

Nixon Aides Agree to Meet Watergate Panel's Staff

By DAVID E. ROSENBAUM
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WASHINGTON, Nov. 8— Samuel Dash, chief counsel to the Senate Watergate committee, said today that President Nixon's attorneys had agreed to meet with him and Fred D. Thompson, the minor counsel, to discuss the committee's proposal for a meeting with the President.

Mr. Dash said that he had talked by telephone with Leonard Garment, the President's counsel, and J. Fred Buzhardt Jr., his special counsel, but that no time or place for their meeting had been set.

Mr. Dash noted that committee and White House staff members previously met several times, and committee officials cautioned against drawing any conclusions from the fact that Mr. Garment and Mr. Buzhardt had consented to another meeting.

At the White House, aides to the President continued to say they doubted that Mr. Nixon would agree to be questioned by the Senators.

When Ronald L. Ziegler, Mr. Nixon's press secretary, was asked today about the prospects for a meeting, he responded, "We'll see if there's something to disclose. Mr. Dash is obviously pretty good at that."

Weicker's Suggestion

Mr. Ziegler was apparently alluding to allegations that the committee has had difficulty keeping secrets.

The committee decided Monday to ask its staff to explore with the White House whether Mr. Nixon would be willing to meet with the committee's members and, if so, under what conditions.

The decision was prompted by a proposal by Senator Low-

ell P. Weicker Jr., Republican of Connecticut, that the Senators question Mr. Nixon at the White House. Mr. Weicker suggested that the President not be placed under oath but that a transcript of the interrogation be made public.

At the committee's public hearing today, a fund-raiser for Mr. Nixon vigorously denied an allegation, made yesterday, that the President's campaign finance chairman, Maurice H. Stns, had promised to help a Florida homebuilder settle his problems with the Federal Housing Administration in return for a sizable campaign contribution.

John J. Priestes told the committee under oath yesterday that his contribution was solicited last year by Benjamin Fernandez, who was chairman of the National Hispanic Finance Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Prison Term Looms

Priestes, who is scheduled to begin a one-year prison term next week, testified that Mr. Fernandez had introduced him to Mr. Stns in Washington and that Mr. Stns had said, "I'll see what we can do. If we can't do any good for you, we'll return the check to you."

Today, Mr. Fernandez called Priestes a "liar" and said, "I am appalled, shocked, and disgusted with the tenor of his testimony."

Also under oath, he made a point-by-point contradiction of Priestes' testimony.

Priestes had said that Mr. Fernandez solicited his contribution. Mr. Fernandez said that Priestes had made the first contact with him.

Priestes had said that Mr. Fernandez had been aware of news accounts that the F.H.A.

was about to suspend him from participating in Government-financed housing programs. Mr. Fernandez said that he had never heard of Priestes before an associate of the builder got in touch with him.

Mr. Fernandez denied that he had ever promised any favors in exchange for Priestes' donation.

Priestes contended that Mr. Fernandez had asked him for a \$100,000 contribution, had told him that the first check should be for \$25,000 and had finally asked for the money in cash. Mr. Fernandez said that the \$100,000 figure had never been mentioned, that the \$25,

000 check had been volunteered and that there had never been a discussion of a cash contribution.

Priestes testified that he had asked Mr. Stns to call George Romney, then Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, about his problems and that Mr. Stns had agreed to do so. Mr. Fernandez said that Priestes never asked Mr. Stns to call anyone and that Mr. Stns never promised to do so.

Mr. Stns filed a statement with the committee yesterday denying Priestes' allegations.

The committee plans to continue its inquiry into campaign finance practices next week.