

SRI 'Work in Progress' on Nixon's Watergate Tapes

Stanford Research Institute in Menlo Park confirmed yesterday that it has been retained by the White House to provide "technical consultation" on President Nixon's Watergate tape recordings.

But Ron Deutsch, spokesman for the institute, refused to say much more than that or even say which tape or tapes SRI had. He said he was prohibited by U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica from doing so.

White House spokesmen in Washington declined comment on the same grounds.

But the tape that both the White House and Sirica are interested in is one made on June 20, 1972, between Nixon and then-White House chief

of staff H.R. Haldeman on the first full working day after the break-in at Democratic headquarters in the Watergate complex.

The White House disagreed with a court-appointed panel of experts who found that an 18½-minute hum in the recording had been caused by five to nine manual operations.

"SRI was retained by the White House, specifically by James D. St. Clair, special counsel to the President, to provide technical consultation on White House tape recordings," Deutsch said. "He requested us on January 20 after meetings to undertake the research.

"Ever since then we have been conducting experimen-

tal work and providing consultation to St. Clair and his staff."

He said the project is headed by Michael Hecker, senior research engineer in the sensory science research center, and that "work is still in progress."

Sirica admonished both sides earlier this month to refrain from public comment pending outcome of the Grand Jury investigation into the cause of the hum.