

The Next Step on Watergate Report

Washington

Chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica is expected to decide this week what to do with a sealed report handed to him on Friday by one of the Watergate grand juries, reliable sources said yesterday.

The 50-paragraph report is said to outline the grand jury's conclusion that President Nixon joined in a conspiracy to cover up the Watergate bugging. It was accompanied by a recommendation that the jury's findings, and the evidence supporting them, be turned over to the House Judiciary Committee considering the impeachment of Mr. Nixon.

A source close to the prosecution reported that Leon Jaworski, the special prosecutor, expects a ruling from Sirica today. The judge can order the report resealed or can send all or part of it to the committee. He can also decide whether to order that the report be released publicly.

Sirica, after glancing briefly at the report, had it locked in a safe in his chambers.

Mr. Nixon spent yesterday at his retreat at Camp David, Md. There was no indication that he had conferred with his lawyers, either personally or by telephone.

But other White House officials said that the lawyers are studying the possibility of making a formal motion before Sirica in an effort to block the release of the grand jury report.

If the White House moves to suppress the report, the Judiciary Committee, which has heretofore been reluctant to involve itself in court proceedings, would have to decide whether to authorize its counsel, John Doar, to challenge Mr. Nixon's lawyers in court.

Other Watergate developments yesterday:

- Vice President Gerald Ford said in an interview that he has "reason to believe" that Mr. Nixon will cooperate with the Judiciary Committee in providing documents for its impeachment inquiry, so long as the requests are reasonable.

- John D. Ehrlichman, one of the seven presidential associates indicted on Friday, said in Seattle that he was "not surprised" at the grand jury's action. At the

same time, it was disclosed that five of his friends had started a campaign to raise \$150,000 for Ehrlichman's legal defense.

- Appearing on NBC's television program "Meet the Press," Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, the Democratic whip, said the grand jury's action posed "serious implications" for the presidency by bringing the Watergate coverup "to the Oval Office" for the first time.

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