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Judge Sirica Orders Gag In Dispute Over Subpoena

Washington

U.S. District Judge John Sirica yesterday clamped secrecy on the latest battle between the White House and special prosecutor Leon Jaworski over subpoenaed Watergate evidence.

The White House has indicated it will fight the subpoena all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary.

Sirica ordered Jaworski's formal legal brief on the issue sealed from public view and said "it may be necessary" to hear arguments Monday afternoon in his chambers rather than in open court as scheduled.

He offered no explanation, and made clear after a 45-minute closed meeting with lawyers for parties to the dispute that none would be forthcoming immediately.

"The court will have no comment regarding what

Nixon Speech

Washington

President Nixon will fly to Oklahoma late this afternoon to give an evening speech at commencement exercises at Oklahoma State University, the White House said yesterday.

Deputy Press Secretary Gerald L. Warren said he did not have any firm information about the President's weekend plans thereafter.

Associated Press

was discussed at the meeting, and has instructed all counsel and their clients similarly not to comment," Sirica said in a three-paragraph statement.

"No questions by reporters on this subject should be directed to chambers."

It was conjectured that Jaworski's legal brief may have triggered the need for secrecy, perhaps by inclusion of some grand jury testimony or other sensitive materials in support of his demand for further White House evidence.

At issue is Jaworski's subpoena, issued April 18 on Sirica's orders, for tapes and other documents relating to 64 conversations President Nixon had with top aides after the Watergate bugging.

Jaworski said the evidence was vital both for prosecution and defense counsel to prepare for the September 9 trial of seven former key Nixon lieutenants accused of conspiring to hush up the scandal.

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