

Defense Tactics In Coverup Case

Washington

Some of the six defendants in the Watergate coverup are likely to ask for a postponement of the trial that is to begin September 9, one of their attorneys said yesterday.

One lawyer, who asked not to be named, went so far as to declare that U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica may free some of the defendants.

"We hope this results in a dismissal," he said.

At the heart of the lawyers thinking is the crescendo of publicity surrounding Mr. Nixon's release of three transcripts of taped conversations between the President and former White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman on June 23, 1972, six days after the original Watergate break-in.

The lawyers said public awareness of those tapes, plus additional presidential transcripts to come and a possible Senate impeachment trial, will make it impossible to find an impartial jury anywhere in the country.

Frank Strickler, an attorney for Haldeman, said the lawyers for all the cover-up defendants held a strategy session yesterday afternoon but that no immediate decisions were made about re-

questing postponement of the trial.

Besides Haldeman, the other defendants in the case are former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, former White House assistant Attorney General Robert C. Mardian and Kenneth W. Parkinson, an attorney for the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Lawyers for Haldeman declined comment on the new developments, but one other attorney familiar with the case speculated on the likelihood of Haldeman pleading guilty.

Another element in the case is that if Mr. Nixon resigns, he is almost sure to appear as a witness at the trial. Even if Mr. Nixon stands trial in the Senate, defense lawyers said Mr. Nixon is such a vital witness for the criminal trial that the trial should be delayed until it's clear how long he'll remain in office.

If Mr. Nixon should remain in the presidency, it is unlikely he would appear at the cover-up trial.

A second closely related element is the likely appearance of some of the coverup defendants as witnesses at a Senate trial.

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