

Cover-Up Trial Delay Opposed by Jaworski

By William Chapman
Washington Post Staff Writer

Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski has opposed a petition to the Supreme Court asking for a further delay in the start of the Watergate cover-up conspiracy trial.

Jaworski said defendants in the case do not need more time to review tape-recorded presidential conversations and said the court should not consider delaying the trial because of the danger of adverse pre-trial publicity.

The prosecutor's statement, filed Friday, was a response to a petition by lawyers for former White House aide John D. Ehrlichman to put off the trial until after Jan. 1.

The trial originally was set for Sept. 9, but U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica last week postponed it until Sept. 30 at the suggestion of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

Ehrlichman, appealing that ruling to the Supreme Court, said more time is needed to

review tape-recorded conversations and their transcripts.

Jaworski opposed that argument, saying that Ehrlichman "... has virtually the same access as the government to the recordings and can obtain transcripts now being prepared by the specially recruited expert transcribers at virtually the same time as the prosecution." Transcripts of all the tapes will be available by "about Sept. 9," he added.

Ehrlichman and three other defendants had contended that the trial should be delayed because of the heavy publicity about them during the period preceding Mr. Nixon's Aug. 9 resignation.

Jaworski argued that "adequate mechanisms exist to protect the rights of all of the defendants to obtain an impartial jury and a fair trial." Among them, he said, are Sirica's restrictions on out-of-court comment on the case.

Meanwhile, another defendant, former White House chief of staff H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, yesterday lost an effort to subpoena other tape recordings and transcripts of testimony taken in executive session by the Senate Watergate committee.

Sirica ruled yesterday that motions filed by Haldeman's lawyers did not show enough relevance for the material. He said it also appeared that "much of the material sought has been or will be made available to the defendants" without subpoenas.