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Effect of Jaworski Resignation

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Leon Jaworski's resignation as special prosecutor later this month should have no effect on the Watergate coverup trial, officials in Jaworski's office said yesterday.

The government will outline its case to the jury today. That task and the rest of the trial proceedings were long ago assigned by Jaworski to a team of assistants, the officials noted.

Henry S. Ruth Jr., Jaworski's deputy, spent the day yesterday in his office, going over final preparations for the trial with James F. Neal, the associate special prosecutor, who heads the coverup prosecution team.

Jaworski, who announced Saturday that he would resign October 25, was in New York for the weekend. In his letter of resignation, he recommended that Ruth be appointed his successor.

Jaworski noted Saturday that the trial, probably the special prosecutor's last major undertaking, was "now in progress" and that his work, therefore, was largely finished.

While the prosecution of the five coverup defendants has been placed almost completely in Neal's hands, aides to Jaworski said that there were conceivable circumstances in which the special prosecutor might have been called upon to make an important decision.

For example, if one of the defendants should decide to change his plea, it would be up to the special prosecutor to decide whether to accept a plea of guilty to reduced charges.

Even then, however, the aides said that Jaworski would almost certainly have followed Neal's recommendation.

"I don't know of any instance in which Neal was countermanded by Jaworski," one official said.

Attorney General William B. Saxbe said Saturday [12 Oct] that he would consult with the White House and would then appoint a new special prosecutor before Jaworski leaves office.

While the office does not require confirmation by the Senate, it was expected that the Senate Judiciary Committee would call Jaworski's successor to testify at public hearings.

Jaworski and his predecessor, Archibald Cox, testified before the committee, and much of Jaworski's independence stemmed from a charter that he worked out with the committee.

(No source given for this report.)