

No Tapes Now for Ervin Committee

Washington

After President Nixon agreed yesterday to give the Watergate tapes to the courts, the Senate Watergate committee was again left without ready access to the information they contain.

Mr. Nixon announced Friday that the committee was to receive a summary of the contents of the tapes after the recordings had been verified by Senator John C. Stennis.

The President met with Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. (Dem-N.C.) the committee chairman, and Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. (Rep-Tenn), the vice-chairman, Friday and said in his announcement that night that the senators had agreed to the compromise.

But the next day, after Mr. Nixon had ordered the dismissal of Watergate special prosecutor, Archibald Cox because he would not accept the arrangement, a debate began between Ervin and the White House over just what that arrangement tailed.

TRANSCRIPTS

Ervin declared that he had been promised a full transcript of the tapes. The White House said that it would turn over only an edited version.

Yesterday, Ervin sent a telegram to the President demanding "a verbatim copy of the exact words as recorded on the tapes."

Alexander M. Haig, Mr. Nixon's chief of staff, announced at the White House yesterday afternoon that the arrangement was dead. He said that the decision to re-

lease the tape recordings to Judge John J. Sirica had decided the main controversy and that "the President does not want to impose on Senator Stennis."

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Two members of the Watergate committee, who asked not to be quoted by name, said yesterday that they believed that Ervin and Baker had been deceived into allowing themselves to be used by Mr. Nixon when he ordered Cox's discharge.

Ervin could not be reached yesterday. But aide Rufus L. Edmisten, who was with Ervin throughout the weekend, said that the senator had no idea that the arrangement he agreed to would be used as a vehicle to fire Cox.

Baker said in a telephone interview that he might not have agreed to the President's solution if he had known it would lead to Cox's dismissal. "It certainly would have added another area of consideration," Baker said.

Yesterday morning, before the White House announced that it would turn over the material the committee seeks to Judge Sirica, the committee asked the Court of Appeals to expedite action on the committee's suit to obtain the tapes.

Sirica, chief judge of the U.S. District Court, ruled last week that he did not have jurisdiction to force the President to release the tapes and documents to the committee. The committee filed notice Friday that it would appeal the ruling.

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