

Nixon Aides Counter Hill Over Tapes

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KEY BISCAAYNE, Fla., May 24 — Spokesmen for President Nixon counterattacked the House Judiciary Committee today, saying it had put out distorted statements of what the President had said and had resorted to "a false issue" in charging that the transcripts of tape recordings are incomplete.

The spokesmen again called on the committee to hold its meetings in public and challenged the two senior members to listen to tapes if they doubt the authenticity of the transcripts.

Press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler made the comments aboard the Spirit of '76 as Mr. Nixon flew here for the second weekend in a row, reiterating points deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren made in his regular morning briefing at the White House.

Mr. Nixon flew here with Ziegler and Alexander M. Haig Jr., White House staff chief, but without any members of his family. Mrs. Nixon was said to be visiting friends in New York.

The President plans a radio speech to the nation on the economy Saturday and another speech Monday, Memorial Day, before returning to Washington.

Before leaving Washington, Mr. Nixon conferred for about 45 minutes with Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush, who it was learned has been chosen as the administration's chief economic coordinator with offices in the White House, and for about 35 minutes with the President's counsel, James D. St. Clair and J. Fred Buzhardt, Ziegler announced.

The President and his lawyers discussed "the whole question of the transcripts" raised Thursday by the House Judiciary Committee, Ziegler said.

"We feel the matter regarding the completeness of the transcripts is a false issue," Ziegler said. "It can be solved by the chairman and ranking Republican member listening to the tapes."

Declaring that the committee was not taking a reasonable position, Ziegler said the tapes are of varying quality and there can be honest disagreement over the meaning of various words. He asserted that the committee has made "various errors" in the transcripts it has prepared from the tapes.

"But the overall substance as evidentiary material is very clear if looked at in its entirety," Ziegler said. "It is not logical for the committee to talk about the transcripts unless the chairman and ranking Republican come down and listen."

Ziegler said it was time for the committee to concentrate on the Watergate issue. "If they won't open the hearings on the Watergate phase, then they should make public the complete record of executive committee proceedings so the distortions can be cleared up," Ziegler told reporters.

At the White House earlier, Warren charged that the committee leaked a report Thursday from the President's diary of March 21, 1973, which began: "As far as the day was concerned it was uneventful."

The dictabelt, according to Warren, has the President actually saying: "As far as the day was concerned it was uneventful except for the talk with Dean."

March 21 was the day on which the President says John W. Dean III, then his counsel, gave him new information on the Watergate cover-up.

Warren called the report a "selective leak" which "prejudiced the position of the President" and said it "proves the point that the hearings should be opened."

When asked whether Mr. Nixon had completed the payment of back taxes assessed against him, Warren declined to give a clear answer and said he would not discuss the matter.

However, when Ziegler was asked, he said he believed that "the bill that was due has been paid" and that the President "is in the process of completing payments on schedule."