

When Nixon Will Talk on Watergate

San Clemente

President Nixon will speak out on the Watergate case as soon as the first phase of the Senate investigating committee's hearings are over but not before, White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said yesterday.

Ziegler would not say how the President would address the subject of Watergate, but he said Mr. Nixon definitely would hold future news conferences and also make known his views in other forums.

It was the first time a spokesman had said flatly that Mr. Nixon has no plans for a news conference or a public comment on Watergate until after the end of the first phase of the hearings. Previously he had said that the White House planned no rebuttal to charges at the time they were made before the committee.

Mr. Nixon has not held a news conference since March 15. His most recent statement on Watergate was May 22.

PHASE

Senator Sam Ervin has estimated his committee will complete the Watergate phase of its investigation sometime in early August.

After it completes the Watergate phase, it will investigate charges of unfair campaign tactics in last year's election and also the

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issue of campaign financing.

"The President will address the matter in an appropriate forum or forums," Ziegler said in answer to questions.

While he declined to specify what forum — a public speech, a statement or an interview — Ziegler said that Mr. Nixon definitely plans to "speak to this matter in a way he considers appropriate at the time."

MEMBERS

But Ziegler said flatly that the President would not appear before the Ervin committee, would not send it a written statement and would not invite its members to meet him informally at the White House.

"The President feels he has a responsibility to the office of president" to observe the constitutional requirement of a separation of powers, the press secretary said.

"He has a responsibility to maintain the prerogatives of the executive branch," Ziegler commented.

Ziegler and other officials said repeatedly and emphatically that, throughout the lengthy testimony last week of former presidential counsel John W. Dean III, Mr. Nixon refused to watch any of the sessions on television.

But it is a known fact that the President is not a television watcher the way his predecessor, Lyndon B. Johnson, was. Some of the President's closest associates have privately complained because he refuses to study reruns of his own television appearances to improve on his performance.

The President is expected to remain in San Clemente this week and to return to Washington Sunday or Monday.

Informants here privately give reports on the President similar to those some of his former aides have given in the last few days in television interviews, and similar to the interview his special counsel, Fred J. Buzhardt, gave over the weekend.

FACTS

They insist that the President still does not have all the facts about Watergate or the cover-up — that he is constantly seeking additional information — and still is basically puzzled about what happened.

Ziegler and deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren continue to assert that the President stands by his May 22 statement in which he said he had no prior knowledge of Watergate, did not know about the cover-up until late March and never offered clemency to any of

those convicted in the Watergate break-in.

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