

A Report That Nixon Won't Release Tapes

Washington

President Nixon plans to tell the Senate Watergate committee in a letter Monday that he will not release tapes of his conversations with former aides on Watergate-related matters.

Informed sources said yesterday that, despite strong pressure to release the tapes, Mr. Nixon has decided to stand by his decision announced July 7 to deny the committee access to presidential papers, including tapes.

Officials would not discuss the possibility that the President may use the tapes in some fashion in his own defense. But this posed the question whether any excerpts he may decide to use from the tapes would be accepted by the public as the whole story.

The White House was stunned yesterday when Chairman Sam J. Ervin (Dem-N.C.), misled by a hoax, announced at the committee hearings that the

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President had agreed to make available the tapes relating to the Watergate case.

(See Page 8 for details.)

Upon learning of the hoax, Mr. Nixon immediately ordered an FBI investigation to try to determine who had telephoned the misinformation to Ervin about release of the tapes.

While Mr. Nixon is said to recognize that by withholding the tapes he gives his enemies fresh ammunition with which to charge that he is covering up his involvement in the scandal, he began work yesterday drafting a letter explaining his position.

It will follow generally the lines of the argument he made to Ervin July 7, when he asserted that "I shall not testify before the committee or permit access to Presidential papers."

"I want to strongly em-

phasize that my decision in both cases," the President said in his letter then, "is based on my constitutional obligation to preserve intact the powers and prerogatives of the presidency and not upon any desire to withhold information relevant to your inquiry."

Rufus L. Edmisten, deputy counsel of the investigating committee, said that White House counsel Leonard Garment informed committee counsel Samuel Dash that "on Monday morning the President will be sending up a full and complete statement to all the members of the committee."

TIME

It could not be learned whether Mr. Nixon's letter will set a time for the President's promised meeting with Ervin, or whether the letter may indicate the President no longer believes a meeting should be held.

White House Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said "no date" has been set for the meeting with Ervin. He would not elaborate.

Asked what was being done with the tapes of presidential conversations, Ziegler said "They have never been transcribed. The President mentioned to me again this morning that there has never been a transcript made of any of the tapes at all."

The President's counsels have not reviewed the tapes, Ziegler said.

STAFF

Mr. Nixon is scheduled to leave Bethesda (Md.) Naval Hospital about 9 a.m. today and drive to the White House for a series of meetings with senior staff members.

Ziegler said that the President is feeling much better and wanted to meet with staff members before going in the afternoon to Camp David.

After a final examination yesterday afternoon, the President's doctors reported that "the physical examination indicated complete clearing of the viral pneumonia. Yesterday's electro-



AP Wirephoto

ROBERT C. MARDIAN A clear 'impression'

cardiogram was again normal. The President has tolerated the program of increased activity and staff work without any discomfort or excessive fatigue."

Dr. Walter R. Tkach, the President's physician, said that Mr. Nixon's chest was "entirely clear" and that "he is now more eager than ever to jump into the work program." He said he had "cautioned" the President to report any fatigue.

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