

Nixon Seen Knowing of Cover-Up

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The House Judiciary Committee said yesterday that it appears President Nixon knew of the Watergate cover-up sooner than he has stated and edited that fact out of the Watergate transcripts released by the White House.

Committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.) issued a statement noting that the White House transcript for a March 17, 1973, conversation between the President and then White House Counsel John W. Dean III covered only three pages and mentioned only the "Plumbers" break-in of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist and dirty trickster Donald Segretti.

But Rodino said a tape in the committee's possession for June 4, 1973, records the President describing to his press secretary, Ronald L. Zeigler, a number of his taped conversations, "apparently" including that of March 17. The President's description of that meeting includes "a discussion of the Watergate matter and the possible involvement of White House personnel and others," Rodino said.

Dean has said he first gave the President the full story of the Watergate cover-up and involvement by White House staff, up to the President's chief of staff, H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, four days later, on March 21. Rodino said that John Doar, special counsel for the committee's inquiry into whether Mr. Nixon should be impeached, was directed to confer with the President's lawyer, James D. St. Clair, "to seek clarification with respect to this matter."

The committee subpoenaed

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the March 17 tape last month, but has not received it because the White House response was to release edited transcripts rather than the tapes.

The committee listened yesterday to the one-hour-and-43-minute tape of the March 21 conversation in which Dean layed out the Watergate story and told of hush money being paid and more needed, and the President talked alternately about the need to raise the money and whether it wouldn't be better to make the whole thing public.

The White House is expected to turn the committee down again today on its second subpoena, issued last week, demanding 11 more tapes of presidential Watergate conversations during the period before and immediately after the break-in on June 17, 1972.

St. Clair said two weeks ago that Mr. Nixon would turn over no more Watergate materials, even if subpoenaed, because he be-

lieves that he has given the committee the full story.

Yesterday St. Clair said he has no reason to believe the President has changed his mind. The subpoena orders the tapes turned over to the committee by 10 a.m. today.

St. Clair also asked for another day before giving the committee an answer to its request, not yet put in the form of a subpoena, for 66 tapes on the milk fund and the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. anti-trust case matters.

The President's lawyer had promised an answer by Monday, but called Monday evening to say he would talk to Doar yesterday and then reported he has not yet received instructions from the President.

St. Clair had said previously that he didn't think the White House had any more milk or ITT tapes, but added that he would look. If there were any, he said, he expected that the President would turn them over.

Rodino said the commit-

tee expects a response today, and if none is forthcoming would "take action in the next few days" to subpoena the tapes.

The committee has decided that it has no effective way to enforce its subpoenas against the President. It will not go to court to seek an order for compliance because it feels that the courts have no constitutional role in the impeachment process.

Nor has it asked the sergeant-at-arms of the House to storm the White House and seize the tapes. Instead, Rodino says each member can draw inferences from the President's refusal to turn over requested material. The committee could rule that his failure to comply with a congressional subpoena is an impeachable offense.

The committee wants the 46 milk tapes to help determine whether the President ordered a March, 1971, increase in milk-price supports worth an estimated \$500 million to the industry in exchange for campaign contributions.

It wants the 20 ITT tapes to learn whether the President acted improperly in the settlement of an antitrust case against International Telephone and Telegraph Corp., which had pledged a contribution to help finance the 1972 Republican national convention.

Rodino told reporters that the committee will remain in closed session, listening to tapes and examining other evidence assembled by the staff on the Watergate cover-up, the rest of this week and perhaps part of next. This suggests that the committee is falling further behind in its time schedule.

When the committee began its closed-session examination of confidential material nearly two weeks ago, Rodino talked of an initial presentation of four or five days. This has now slipped to more than two weeks and has probably ended Rodino's hope of the committee's reaching by the end of June a decision on whether the President should be impeached.