

Return From Florida

Nixon, St. Clair Talk Over Case

Washington

President Nixon returned to Washington last night on the eve of a historic Supreme Court showdown, convinced of the "correctness" of his position on presidential powers, press secretary Ron Ziegler said.

Mr. Nixon's lawyers will present oral arguments to the high court this morning on the question of control of 64 White House tapes subpoenaed by Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski and whether a grand jury was within its powers in naming Mr. Nixon an unindicted co-conspirator in the Watergate coverup.

Ziegler told reporters that Mr. Nixon conferred by telephone with his lawyer, James D. St. Clair, for 20 minutes late yesterday afternoon before he left Key Biscayne, Fla.

Again Ziegler refused to say whether Mr. Nixon would abide by a Supreme Court ruling in the case.

The President has arranged a morning meeting with Vice President Gerald Ford at the same time, the Supreme Court meets, Ziegler said.

Mr. Nixon flew to Florida after a week of summit meetings in the Soviet Union, arriving at his Key Biscayne estate Wednesday evening.

He spent a relaxed Fourth of July weekend, concentrating mainly on a regimen of swimming, walking on the beach and boating on doctors' orders to help him get over his attack of phlebitis, a blood clot in his left leg.

Mr. Nixon does not like to talk about his ailment, but

when he arrived in Washington last night, he made a beeline for about 150 spectators along the fence. One of the first questions was, "How is your leg?"

"Fine, fine," Mr. Nixon said hurriedly, moving on to shake more hands.

Although his leg is still swollen and will be so permanently, according to his doctor, Walter Tkach — he did not appear to be dragging the leg, as he did in the Soviet Union.

Before leaving Florida, Mr. Nixon made an unannounced helicopter trip to Palm Beach to look over the plush Mar-A-Lago estate, willed to the government for possible use by president or visiting foreign dignitaries.

A White House spokesman said the President "wanted to go privately." The spokesman also said there was no room for a second helicopter for reporters to land. The estate covers 17 acres and includes a nine-hole golf course.

Mar-A-Lago was left to the government by cereal fortune heiress Marjorie Merriweather Post, who died in 1973. The property includes citrus groves and tropical plantings.

A press aide said "the President personally wanted to visit the property to determine its potential."

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