

Nixon Is Reported Willing To Compromise on Tapes

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LAGUNA BEACH, Calif., Jan. 8—President Nixon may be willing to accept a limited compromise with the Senate Watergate committee on the release of documents and tape recordings despite the strong position he took last week against the panel's subpoena, White House officials said today.

The White House will continue to litigate against the committee's efforts to subpoena material it feels necessary for its investigation, officials here said, but Mr. Nixon might be willing to release some papers and tapes on a limited, voluntary basis.

Meanwhile, Gerald L. Warren, deputy Presidential press secretary, confirmed that Charles Alan Wright, constitutional law expert at the University of Texas had returned to the White House as a part-time consultant. He will again represent the President's position in court on the question of executive privilege to withhold from the Senate committee a vast amount of subpoenaed White House material.

"Mr. Wright will be assuming an active consultant's role in our answer to the amended complaint in the original subpoena," Mr. Warren said.

Mr. Wright left the White House last fall and returned t

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Nixon Aides Hint at a Tapes Compromise

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his teaching duties somewhat upset over how he had been treated.

He told Chief Judge John J. Sirica in late October that the President would turn over the Federal District Court in Washington all the material sought by the special Watergate prosecutor's office. A few days later, the White House disclosed that two key tape recordings sought by the prosecutor never existed, a fact the President and some of his assistants had known for a month.

Mr. Wright was informed of the fact by a White House secretary by telephone.

However, he said at that time that he would be willing to return to the White House to resume arguing the question of

executive privilege should it arise again. The question did arise again when the President decided to fight the Watergate committee's subpoena.

Vice President Ford suggested Sunday that there might be room for compromise between the White House and the committee, but he backed the President's refusal to produce the more than 500 subpoenaed items, an amount he considered excessive.

Today Mr. Ford said he was encouraged that a "head to head confrontation" over the tapes might be avoided in view of a subsequent statement by Senator Sam J. Ervin, Democrat of North Carolina, chairman of the committee. Mr. Ervin indicated that the committee might be willing to settle first the five tape recordings it sought in its first subpoena last summer.

"If the White House is willing to surrender any tapes," Mr. Ervin said, "I wish they would surrender these five tapes."

Yesterday, Mr. Warren indicated that the President was not considering compromise and that Mr. Ford had been speaking on his own. Other

sources, however, said that some area of compromise was possible and Mr. Warren, in his briefing today, reflected this thinking.

He noted that the committee had made no formal offer of a compromise, but added, "I can tell you if there was a further request, and there has been none, it would be evaluated in the light of the attitude reflected in that request."

Mr. Nixon, in his letter to the committee last week refusing to turn over the subpoenaed items, said, "I can only view your subpoena as an overt attempt to intrude into the executive to a degree that constitutes an unconstitutional usurpation of power."

That was a position the President rigidly followed for most of last year, one that he surrendered when he agreed to turn over subpoenaed material sought by the prosecutor.

Mr. Nixon's assistants have indicated that, in his dealings with Congress, he might relent and release some of the documents sought, but without giving up his right to keep documents he does not consider pertinent to the inquiry.