

Nixon's Feeling On Those Tapes

Washington

President Nixon has told the chairman of the Senate Watergate committee that he will not supply presidential papers to the Senate investigators because he is convinced the committee is seeking to incriminate him, reliable sources have reported.

The committee chairman, Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. (Dem-N.C.), said Saturday that the President's position was making it "more difficult" for him to "continue to cling to the presumption" that Mr. Nixon was not involved in the Watergate conspiracy.

The President's comments to Ervin appeared to represent the basis for Mr. Nixon's increasingly contentious attitude toward the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities.

TALK

Authoritative sources at the committee said the President had made the accusation about the committee's motives — in the sources' words that the committee was "out to get him." — when he talked with Ervin on the telephone July 12, the day Mr. Nixon was hospitalized with viral pneumonia.

The White House had no comment on the report. But a high administration official, asked to verify the account, complained that "even a personal phone conversation between a President and a senator, or an interpretation of it, sooner or later — finds its way into the press. We continue to be mystified by this."

"I can think of no rational reason for the President not

turning over the tapes unless the evidence found in them would be against him," Ervin said Saturday.

"Those seeking the truth will draw the inference — and a justified inference — that his reason for not producing the tapes is because the evidence would be adverse to him."

SKEPTICAL

It was the most skeptical statement that any committee member has made about the President's assertions of innocence.

Mr. Nixon's denunciation of the committee's motives, made in what one of the Senate sources described as an "emotional state," occurred when Ervin telephoned the President 11 days ago to seek a face-to-face conference on the issue of the documents.

The sources, paraphrasing portions of the 14-minute phone conversation, said that Ervin had diplomatically but forcefully told Mr. Nixon that the President did not "have a leg to stand on" in invoking the constitutional doctrine of executive privilege as the basis for withholding documents.

Ervin was said to have repeated directly to the President the same contentions that, consequently, any documents — that nothing in the Constitution either required the President to seek re-election or excused the commission of a crime and that, consequently, any documents related to the 1972 campaign or to violations of the law must be turned over to the investigating committee.

The senators are seeking

the tapes and documents in the hope that the White House materials might supply some definitive answers to the central questions about Mr. Nixon's possible role in the Watergate cover-up.

John W. Dean III, the former White House counsel, whose papers are among those being withheld by the President, charged at the Senate hearings last month that Mr. Nixon was personally involved in the cover-up.

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