

A Compromise

Nixon May Let Some Tapes Go

San Clemente

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 hardline position he took last week against the panel's subpoena, White House officials said yesterday.

The White House will continue to litigate against the committee's efforts to subpoena whatever material it feels is necessary for its investigation, authorities here said.

But Mr. Nixon might be willing to release some papers and tapes on a limited basis voluntarily, they added.

The new White House position was disclosed as Vice President Gerald R. Ford said yesterday he is encouraged that an offer from Senate Watergate committee chairman Sam J. Ervin can avoid "what appeared to be a head-to-head confrontation" over the tapes.

Ford said that "with a little refinement," Ervin's suggestion that he might settle for five key tapes instead of the subpoena of nearly 500 recordings and documents could be a basis for compromise. The tapes are of conversations between the President and former White House counsel John W. Dean III.

Ford said he had not studied Ervin's statement on accepting the five Dean tapes and could not commit himself to it, but added that it appeared to be in line with his own statement Sunday that compromise might be possible if the Senate committee would scale down its request.

Ford's comments Sunday prompted a White House statement on Monday that virtually disassociated the President and his aides from the vice president's hope for a compromise.

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