

# Ervin, Stennis Feel Firings Don't

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Despite the resignations of Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William D. Ruckelshaus and the firing of Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, other principals in President Nixon's compromise on the Watergate tapes said last night they feel the

agreement is still in effect. "I think we still have an agreement," Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), chairman of the Senate select committee on Watergate, said in Asheville, N.C., where he was attending a political dinner. "The purposes of Cox and the purposes of the Senate committee are quite different, and we have no relationship with each

other..." Ervin said. "I don't see where the tentative agreement, which still has to be ratified by a majority of the committee, would have any relationship whatever to Archibald Cox or his work or these resignations," Ervin added. It was not immediately clear, however, that the senator and the White House see eye to eye on the nature

of the material to be provided by the President under the agreement. The White House announcement specified an authenticated summary of the relevant material from the tapes, while Ervin has said he believed his committee would get edited verbatim transcripts. Earlier yesterday, Ervin said he "would not receive a

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summary because a summary is another man's interpretation of the contents of the tape." At the same time, Sen. John C. Stennis (D-Miss.), the man chosen by the President to listen to the tapes and verify the summary prepared by Mr. Nixon, said he stood ready "to go to work." "I regret the resignations," the senator said in a

telephone interview, but added that he stood on a statement issued earlier yesterday. In that, he said, "My attitude in connection with these tapes is that I have a job to do... (and) I want to give it every attention and complete the work as soon as I reasonably can." As to the special prosecutor, Stennis said in his statement, "I have had no contact directly or indirectly with Mr. Cox, but I was told in advance that Mr. Cox was not agreeing to this procedure but I did not know that he had rejected it."

Elsewhere on Capitol Hill reaction tended to divide along party lines. Vice President-designate Gerald R. Ford said he felt "the President had no other choice after Cox—who was, after all a subordinate—ref-

used to accept the compromise solution to the tapes issue. "The compromise is fair and reasonable," the Michigan Republican congressman added, "and Cox should have accepted it." "I am deeply sorry to see Richardson resign," Ford said. "He was caught in the middle. He obviously felt he had to do what he did and I respect him for it. I feel the same about Ruckelshaus." Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) called the developments "the ultimate manifestation of contempt by the President for the other two branches of government, the kind of challenge that must find a resolution." Muskie added that he was "shocked," saying, "I find it difficult to believe it's the same country I lived in yes-

terday." Another senator, Stuart Symington (D-Mo.), said, "The record will show that at the President violated his pledge at the time that the Senate confirmed Richardson, the pledge he made with respect to Richardson's independence....It is clear to me there is a solid confrontation."