

# Nixon to Defend Tapes Plan

## Cox Firing Hit

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Lawyers for President Nixon will defend the President's proposed compromise of the tapes issue in court today and contend that the legal requirements will be satisfied when Sen. John Stennis (D-Miss.) completes his review.

The President's counsel sent to the court yesterday a written summary of the arguments they will make, in defense of the compromise Mr. Nixon proposed Friday night.

There was obvious concern that Judge John J. Sirica may not accept the proposal, but White House aides said Mr. Nixon is now confident he can overcome the renewed threats of impeachment. They maintained that once the contents of the tapes are made public the outcry will die down.

Despite the White House optimism, condemnation of the President's action echoed widely yesterday. Three major labor organizations, leading Democratic officials, a liberal Republican organi-

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zation and a number of major newspapers that had supported his re-election assailed Mr. Nixon for firing Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox.

Many of them called on Congress to impeach the President if he does not resign.

The President met yesterday with former Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson, who resigned Saturday along with Deputy Attorney General William D. Ruckelshaus after refusing to dismiss Cox.

Richardson will hold a news conference today which White House aides believe will help clear the air and provide some help to the beleaguered President.

Rep. Barber Conable (R-N.Y.), who disclosed Richardson's meeting with the President, said the White House had been calling Re-

publican members of Congress and "reassuring them that there are options open to the President." But Conable said Republicans in his district were "very upset, and I'm upset."

White House officials acknowledged that the initial reaction to the weekend's developments was overwhelmingly critical, but they insisted that yesterday's reaction was milder.

Some aides expressed confidence that once Stennis listens to the tapes and makes his report to the Senate investigating committee and to the courts the crisis over impeachment will subside.

Officials said that Mr. Nixon has not decided whether to make a speech in defense of his actions. He still has the matter under consideration as well as the alternative of making his arguments at a news conference, one official said.

"The entire question is open," an aide said.

In mid-afternoon, the President and Mrs. Nixon drove to Camp David, Md., for the night. A spokesman said they would return today.

The President's defenders said they hoped that the peace move in the Middle East would convince the critics that Mr. Nixon is pursuing the government's business successfully in the foreign policy field.

Cabinet officers rallied to the President's defense as did a battery of administration officials who spoke privately with members of Congress.

In Atlanta, James T. Lynn, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, called talk of impeachment "frightening."

"I think even the talk of impeachment is frightening

to all of us in the administration," Lynn told a news conference after addressing a conference of the American Institute of Planners, the Associated Press reported.

"I would urge the American people and the Congress as well to stand back from the issue and study carefully what is being proposed before acting," Lynn said.

In San Francisco, Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, said Mr. Nixon had made a "necessary and desirable" compromise on the tapes issue.

The President has agreed to present all the pertinent tapes "to a distinguished member of the other party," Weinberger said.

Declaring that the Watergate investigation "will continue" and that there is no attempt to block the investigation, Weinberger said the President "has the right to dismiss a member of the executive branch."

Weinberger said that the original arrangement between the Senate and Richardson over Cox was improper. Referring to the Senate's insistence that Richardson promise to ap-

point a special prosecutor before it would confirm Richardson, Weinberger said it was like the Senate telling a judge he would not be confirmed unless he agreed to take certain stands on issues in court.