

Nixon switches on talk to nation

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — Claiming preoccupation with the Middle East, President Nixon abruptly cancelled a nationally televised speech tonight in which he was to have defended his actions in the Watergate tape uproar.

Instead, the White House said, Nixon will hold a news conference at the White House tomorrow night (6 p.m. PDT). Meanwhile:

- The House pressed ahead with its inquiry into the possibility of impeaching Nixon as new calls for impeachment were heard. Among them was one from AFL-CIO President George Meany, who said the President is suffering from "dangerous emotional instability."

- The Senate Judiciary Committee decided to begin hearings Monday on Nixon's dismissal of the Justice Department's special Watergate prosecutor, Archibald Cox. Cox will be the first witness.

Deputy White House Press Secretary Gerald Warren said Nixon, who spent the night at his Camp David retreat, had been too preoccupied with developments in the Mideast to prepare the speech he had intended to deliver tonight.

White House sources indicated also that it had been suggested to him that a press conference might be a more successful way than a formal speech to present his position on the startling developments of the last several days.

There is a widespread feeling among his aides that his two previous Watergate speeches were not as successful as a press conference he held at San Clemente in August.

The White House said Nixon had spent the night on the telephone attempting to arrange a ceasefire in the Middle East war. Warren said he planned to spend the rest of the day today dealing with the Mideast, including meeting with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Nixon has not made a public appearance during the tense period since Friday night when the drama began with his offer of a compromise on the release of the Watergate tapes combined with an order to Cox not to continue to pursue the issue in the courts.

At his press conference tomorrow night, he will certainly be asked to explain the dismissal of Cox, which the White House said was the result of his refusal to obey Nixon's order, the resignation of Attorney General Elliot Richardson and the sacking of Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus, both of whom refused to carry out orders to fire Cox.

Then, too, will come questions about the President's sudden about-face, his decision to yield to a federal appeals court order and hand over the tapes to Federal Judge

—From Page 1

John J. Sirica.

Nixon apparently reached his eventful decision after being told that House Republicans would not defend him strongly unless he turned over the tapes.

Reliable sources said important GOP congressmen, including John B. Anderson of Illinois, John J. Rhodes of Arizona and Leslie C. Arends of Illinois, gave that word to presidential counselor Bryce Harlow at a meeting yesterday morning.

Before that, Nixon had intended to fight the matter by claiming that he had settled the dispute out of court by firing Cox. Papers had been filed with Sirica. But, at noon, Nixon informed his chief courtroom lawyer, Charles Alan Wright, that he would produce the tapes.

About the same time, several impeachment resolutions were being introduced in the House. House Speaker Carl Albert referred them to the Judiciary Committee, which announced a preliminary inquiry into whether the evidence warranted a move to impeach Nixon.

Barely two hours later, in Sirica's packed, hushed courtroom, Wright announced that the papers he had filed with the judge were being withdrawn and that the President would comply with the appeals court order to give Sirica the tapes.

"This President does not defy the law, and he has authorized me to say he will comply in full with the orders of the court," Wright said.

Sirica, smiling, said he was "very happy indeed that the President reached the decision."

—See Back Page, Col. 4