

Nixon May Make

The Tapes Public

He Talks With GOP Leaders

Washington

President Nixon told a group of Republican congressional leaders yesterday that he plans to make the White House tapes and other Watergate documents public after they have been submitted to the grand jury.

The President summoned the seven top Republican senators and representatives to the White House and talked for nearly two hours about the effect of the Watergate scandals on his administration and ways to restore public confidence in his leadership.

Representative John B. Anderson (Rep-Ill.), chairman of the House Republican conference, predicted that the taped conversations that precipitated the legal battle between the White House and the Watergate special prosecutors would be released by the President.

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Anderson told reporters he understood that the information on tapes could not be made public until after the recordings had been screened by U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica, and any relevant criminal evidence passed on to the Watergate grand jury.

"But after he (the judge) has ruled and the material has been presented to the grand jury," Anderson said, "a means can be found — and I believe it will — to make all of this information

available to the American public."

Anderson did not specify whether the partial transcripts that the President's personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods, has prepared would be released or if a summary of the recordings that the Watergate prosecutors subpoenaed and the White House refused for

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months to release, would be released.

A White House press spokesman said he did not know what form a public release of Watergate tapes and documents would take.

The congressman hinted, however, that it could be less than a full verbatim disclosure, saying that he believed the President's legal and political position could only be substantially improved "if it is possible to convey all the information on the tapes and other documents to the American people."

He also reported that the Republican leaders had discussed with Mr. Nixon the possibility of his meeting face-to-face with Congress or a representative selection of senators and House members to present his position.

The Senate Watergate committee has suggested for some time that the President could clarify his position with an appearance before the group, whose televised hearings have spotlighted the June, 1972, burglary of the Democratic National Committee headquarters, and subsequent efforts to cover up the crime.

Anderson, who has been more critical of Mr. Nixon on the Watergate issue in the past than many of his colleagues, said he feels "very much encouraged" as a result of the White House meeting and does not believe that the President should resign.

He said the meeting demonstrated that there is "full understanding" by White House advisers that the President's credibility has been badly damaged and a determination "to take steps to restore confidence."

Also at the meeting were Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Republican minority leader; Senator Robert P. Griffin of Michigan, the Republican Whip; Senator John G. Tower of Texas, Chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee; Senator George D. Aiken of Vermont, senior Republican in the Senate; Gerald R. Ford of Michigan, House Republican leader and vice president-designate; and Republican John J. Rhodes of Arizona, chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee.

Among the White House aides attending were Alexander M. Haig Jr., White House chief of staff; Bryce Harlow, counselor to the President; Ronald L. Ziegler, press secretary and assistant to the President; and William Timmons, chief congressional representative.

"The President was absolute and complete in his assurance that he is going to cooperate with the courts

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and the special prosecutor," Anderson said after the meeting. "I feel a great deal more confident."

Under an order issued by Sirica, the White House tapes are to be turned over to the judge, who will in turn pass on those portions to the grand jury that bear on the Watergate investigation. Mr. Nixon has twice said that he would defy the courts on the issue, but he later agreed to comply.

As described by Anderson, White House legal authorities believe it would violate

the court order to make any of the subpoenaed information public before it reached the grand jury.

Yesterday Sirica completed the sixth day of fact-finding hearings on the White House contention that two of the nine conversations subpoenaed by the Watergate prosecutors had never been recorded.

One was a reported telephone conversation between the President and John N. Mitchell, then his campaign manager, on June 20, 1972, three days after the Watergate break-in. The second was a meeting between Mr. Nixon and his counsel, John W. Dean III, in the Executive Office Building on April 15, 1973.

Ziegler indicated at a White House news briefing that a summary of both these conversations would be furnished to Sirica in lieu of the missing tapes. He said that the court would get "information" about the substance of both talks that would assist in establishing the truth.

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