

Nixon Moves to Limit Probe

Washington

President Nixon, in an apparent attempt to limit the scope of the impeachment inquiry, has refused to give the House Judiciary Committee tape recordings or documents that do not bear directly on the Watergate coverup, the committee disclosed yesterday.

If unchallenged by the committee, Mr. Nixon's position would rule out access

by the panel to White House evidence related to such diverse matters as the President's income tax payments, his administration's relations with the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. or the President's decision to authorize the secret bombing of Cambodia in 1969.

The committee members agreed at a lengthy meeting yesterday morning to put off

until later this month a decision on whether to issue formal subpoenas for evidence of the type the President insists on withholding. Committee chairman Peter Rodino (Dem.-N.J.) announced the decision after the meeting.

But Republicans and Democrats on the panel said that they would issue such subpoenas if necessary, and one

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member described the delay as "going the last mile" to encourage the White House to cooperate with the investigation of Mr. Nixon's conduct in office.

In a related action, the committee voted unanimously to urge Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the United States District Court to supply "forthwith" two sealed reports of the Watergate grand jury and a briefcase said to contain evidence of Mr. Nixon's possible role in the alleged conspiracy to obstruct the Watergate investigation.

The White House defiance of the committee, one day after the President declared at a televised news conference that he had made a "very forthcoming offer" to cooperate with the panel, was contained in a letter from James D. St. Clair, the President's special Watergate counsel, to John M. Doar, the Judiciary Committee's special counsel on impeachment.

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The letter, dated Wednesday, said that "in the President's opinion, the Watergate matter and widespread allegations of obstruction of justice in connection therewith are at the heart of this matter."

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St. Clair's letter said that Mr. Nixon, in agreeing to supply the committee with all coverup evidence already turned over to the Watergate special prosecutor, "will have provided the committee with the necessary materials to resolve any questions concerning him."

The President is confident, the letter went on, "that when these are reviewed, the committee will be satisfied that no grounds for impeachment exist."

The Watergate coverup is only one of six broad areas of the House committee's investigation into whether there may be grounds for impeachment, however Mr. Nixon's position would appear to rule out cooperation with the committee in the other five areas.

They are allegations of illegal domestic surveillance activities; 1972 presidential campaign espionage and sabotage; improprieties in Mr. Nixon's personal finances; the use of government agencies for political purposes, and of misuse of presidential power.

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