

Ziegler Suggests They 'Work Late'

New Criticism of House

Washington

The White House yesterday intensified its criticism of the House Judiciary Committee, suggesting that its staff "should perhaps work late into the evening" to quickly completely a preliminary assessment of the impeachment evidence against President Nixon.

White House Press Secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, told newsmen that "we feel that they should move within a matter of weeks" to complete that assessment. After that step, Ziegler said, White House attorneys will then "stand ready to hold cooperative discussions" about the further turnover of documents and tapes.

During a 45-minute briefing yesterday, Ziegler continued what amounted to a public assault on the committee by repeatedly suggesting that it is being irresponsible in demanding more presidential data before completing its analysis of the documents provided earlier this month.

In Houston last week, President Nixon said that the House committee's request for material was "virtually a hunting license or fishing license." He urged that further requests be made after the committee had narrowed the scope of its inquiry and determined the relevancy of each demand.

The President's criticisms were assailed by Speaker of the House Carl Albert in a television interview taped for broadcast last night. Albert characterized one of the President's assertions about the committee's intentions — the allegation that the committee sought to fill a rented U-Haul trailer with White House documents — as "a wild defensive maneuver . . . and almost beneath the dignity of the of-

fice of the President of the United States."

Albert said in the Public Broadcasting Service interview that "I think the President would be well advised

to cooperate. . . because there's nothing that can be done when one of the big issues is coverup." Earlier in the day, Albert rejected a request that he seek equal

television and radio time on behalf of the House committee to rebut Mr. Nixon's allegations. In a letter to Representative John Conyers Jr. (Dem-Mich.), who is a member of the Judiciary Committee, Albert noted that he also was disturbed "by any staged or contrived effort to create the impression that the committee is not acting responsibly or properly."

Nonetheless, he was turning down the request, Albert said, because "I am convinced that history will judge the House by what it does, not by what the President and his spokesman say."

During his briefing yesterday, Ziegler repeatedly stressed that the White House has not "refused" to hand over the additional tapes and documents that have been sought by the committee since February 25.

"If the White House said we don't want to do anything, if we flatly said no," Ziegler asserted, "then that position would be a difficult matter to deal with."

"That is not our position," he said. "We stand ready to cooperate." But that cooperation will only come, the spokesman added, after the Judiciary Committee completes its review of the materials on hand and narrows the focus of its inquiry.

In suggesting that the committee could complete its work within two weeks —

an assertion made after he caustically noted that "they have enough lawyers" — Ziegler left the impression that the committee is seeking "to drag these proceedings out."

Asked to reconcile the White House demand that the Judiciary Committee speed up its work with its request — announced yesterday — that the special Watergate prosecutor wait four more days before pressing his subpoena for more material, Ziegler responded that they were different issues. The subpoena, he added, is "relatively routine in nature."

A spokesman for the

House Judiciary Committee, told of Ziegler's remark that the staff should work into the evenings, responded with a laugh. "Well," he added a moment later, "you know that John Doar (the committee's counsel) is a demon for work."

The aide said that the staff of 42 attorneys and clerks is working weekends and nights to categorize and index the White House material that began arriving March 8. That material, consisting of 19 tapes and hundreds of documents, has also been provided to the special Watergate prosecutor's office.

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