

Nixon Is Given Deadline on Tapes

Washington

The House Judiciary Committee demanded yesterday that President Nixon decide by Tuesday whether he will turn over to it tape recordings of 42 Watergate-related conversations it seeks for its im-

peachment inquiry. "We will subpoena them if we must," committee chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. (Dem.-N.J.) warned. He said "the patience of this committee is wearing thin" after waiting 38 days for a White House reply to the panel's request of February 25.

Congressional officials close to the inquiry said later that they expect the committee to vote next week, perhaps as early as Wednesday, to subpoena the tapes if they are not volunteered by the President.

Two of the President's lawyers, James R. Prochnow and Larry G. Gutteridge, were among the spectators, taking notes, at a meeting of the Judiciary Committee when Rodino declared:

"We have gone forward assuming good faith and cooperation. As regards the President himself, we have been respectfully patient. The courts were patient. The House has been patient. The people have been patient for a long, long time."

At the White House, a presidential spokesman declined comment on the committee's deadline, reiterating that the tapes issue was the subject of confidential

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discussions between lawyers for Mr. Nixon and the committee.

The deadline grew out of the latest such meeting, on Tuesday, at which James D. St. Clair, the President's special counsel, asked the committee's senior lawyers, John M. Doar and Albert E. Jenner Jr., for more information to justify the request for the tapes.

The 42 conversations, some of which the White House has said may never

have been recorded, involved the President and former high-ranking officials of his Administration in February, March and April of last year.

In a letter to St. Clair yesterday, Doar described the tapes as relevant to the central issue of whether the President had been aware of or had joined in the attempt to cover up Administration officials' alleged involvement in the bugging of the Democrats' headquarters in the Watergate complex.

One section of the letter said that the tapes could determine if the discussions "bear upon the President's knowledge or lack of knowledge, participation or lack of participation in the acts of obstruction of justice" alleged in the indictment last month of seven former White House and Nixon reelection campaign aides.

The letter asked for "a reply by Tuesday, April 9, at the latest, with respect to whether or not the conversations referred to in our letter of February 25 will be delivered to the committee."

None of the 21 Democrats and 17 Republicans on the panel dissented from the Tuesday deadline.

Representative Jack Brooks (Dem.-Tex.) said the committee had waited "40 days and 40 nights" for a White House reply and must conclude, like a bridegroom, that "fun is fun but you cannot laugh all night."

The committee's senior Republican, Representative Edward Hutchinson of Michigan, said he failed to understand the White House insistence on more justification for the request. He said the panel is "not after any state secrets" but is seeking evidence to bring this matter to a conclusion.

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