

Rodino Rejects Compromise on Tape Demands

Washington

The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee yesterday ruled out any compromise with the White House over the committee's demand for tape recordings of 42 Watergate-related conversations.

Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr. (Dem-N.J.) said in a television interview that it would be unacceptable for President Nixon's lawyers to decide unilaterally which portions of the recordings were relevant to the committee's impeachment inquiry.

"We have issued a subpoena," Rodino said. "I believe it is necessary that the White House comply because it's in the interest of answering a nagging question that is before the American people."

He added, in an appearance on NBC's "Today" show, that failure by the President to comply fully with the subpoena might constitute, by itself, a ground for impeachment.

Rodino's remarks amounted to a rejection of the reported White House plan to screen out "irrelevant" portions of the tapes before turning them over to the committee by the deadline next Thursday.

Administration officials who declined to be identified told newsmen earlier this week that the President's lawyers would give the committee only those portions of the recordings that the White House considered relevant to the inquiry into Mr. Nixon's official conduct.

The officials said that extraneous or national security matters deleted from the surrendered material would be identified in a statement submitted to the committee.

Rodino said he committee

would not accept any process that would enable the White House to make "the final determination" of what evidence was relevant to the House inquiry. He warned that if the President turned over transcripts rather than tapes "it would be considered a refusal to comply" with the subpoena.

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