

Nixon's 'get tough' stand

WASHINGTON (UPI) — President Nixon has challenged the Senate Watergate committee and special prosecutor Archibald Cox in asserting the supremacy of his office over their requests for his taped conversations with former White House aides implicated in the political scandal.

The President faces two subpoenas for the tapes which he says are now under his "sole control" in the White House complex. His two letters to the panel and the prosecutor made it clear that he is ready for a constitutional confrontation before the Supreme Court.

Nixon signalled his "get tough" stand Friday when he came out of Bethesda Naval Hospital last Friday after a bout with viral pneumonia.

The President, emphasizing that he was back in good health by conducting a series

of pep talks with his top advisers, then went off to his Camp David mountain-top retreat where he conferred with his team of lawyers and other advisers, including Gen. Alexander Haig, his chief of staff, and press secretary Ronald Ziegler on the letters he was drafting to the committee

and Cox rejecting their bids for the tapes.

The President's letter to Sen. Sam Ervin Jr., chairman of the Watergate committee, was uncompromising and appeared to force a confrontation with Congress.

Warren revealed to reporters that Nixon

had listened to a replay of the tapes in early June after he issued his May 22 statement categorically denying any prior knowledge of the Watergate affair or the subsequent coverup.

The press spokesman declined to discuss what led Nixon to listen to the tapes after he had searched his memory so arduously to lay down the facts in the May 22 statement.

From a variety of sources, there were indications that Nixon has decided to fight, apparently relying on the Constitution to back him up. He also hopes that he will be able to swing public opinion in his direction although he is faced with polls showing a weakening of his support, a drastic drop in his popularity and a telling loss in the confidence of the people in his administration.

He has promised that he will address the subject of Watergate publicly at an appropriate time during the hearings. Warren said Monday neither the date nor the forum for Nixon's next review of the scandal in terms of his own presidency has been determined.

But right now, Nixon, who has always said that he relished the battle, now faces the biggest one of his career — one, in fact, on which the history of the Presidency and its power may turn.

If it doesn't get the tapes, committee has three options

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The Senate Watergate committee has three legal options to pursue if President Nixon does not comply with a subpoena to surrender White House tapes related to the bugging scandal.

Committee lawyers described the options this way:

Contempt — It is unlikely the Senate will hold the President of the United States in contempt, but the option is available. The action would first have to be approved by the committee, then debated and passed on the Senate floor.

Suit — If the President takes no action on the subpoena, the committee could file suit seeking a "declaratory

judgment" or a court ruling it has a constitutional right to the tapes, and an injunction ordering the President to turn the tapes over to the committee.

Motion — President Nixon may file a motion to quash the subpoenas on constitutional grounds of separation of powers. The committee would then go to court to settle the issue of whether it has a right to them.

White House lawyers have until 10 a.m. Thursday to respond to the subpoenas. If they respond negatively, the committee will hold an executive session, probably Friday, to discuss its next legal move.

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