

Nixon Ordered Probe of 'Big Jewish Contributors'

IRS Action Sought Against Democratic Donors Before '72 Race, Tapes Show

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President Richard M. Nixon once ordered the Internal Revenue Service to investigate "big Jewish contributors" to the Democratic Party, according to recently released White House tapes.

"Please, get me the names of the Jews," Nixon told his chief of staff, H.R. "Bob" Haldeman, in an Oval Office meeting on Sept. 13, 1971. "You know, the big Jewish contributors to the Democrats. . . . Could you please investigate some of the [expletives]."

The following day, Nixon, speaking in a gruff voice, told Haldeman and

aide Charles W. Colson: "What about the rich Jews? The IRS is full of Jews, Bob."

After Haldeman suggested that "what we ought to do is get a zealot who dislikes those people," Nixon said emphatically: "Go after them like a son of a bitch."

Nixon's scathing references to Jews were also apparent in a conversation with domestic policy chief John Ehrlichman. Speaking in the president's quarters in the Executive Office Building that same month, Nixon said: "John, we have the power. Are we using it now to investigate contributors to Hubert Humphrey, contributors to [Sen. Edmund] Muskie?"

The Jews, you know, that are stealing in every direction?" Muskie, former vice president Humphrey and Sen. George McGovern, who was mentioned on another tape, were all gearing up to challenge Nixon in the 1972 presidential election.

The tape, first reported by the San Francisco Examiner, was among 200 hours of Nixon recordings recently made public by the National Archives. Ehrlichman, who was listening to the Nixon tapes with his wife, Karen, and two other people at the Archives facility in College Park yesterday, refused to comment on the tapes.

Less than a year after the attacks
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'Go After Them,' Nixon Told Haldeman About Jews

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on Jewish contributors, Nixon ordered more comprehensive investigations of Democratic contributors in general.

"What in the name of God are we doing on this score?" Nixon asked rapidly and emphatically in an Oval Office discussion with Haldeman and Ehrlichman on Aug. 3, 1972. "What are we doing about the financial contributors? . . . Are we looking over McGovern's financial contributors? Are we looking over the financial contributors to the Democratic National Committee? . . . Is the Justice Department checking? . . . We have all this power and we're not using it. Now what the Christ is the matter?"

Robert Strauss, who was treasurer

of the Democratic National Committee in 1971, told the Examiner he found Nixon's comments "sickening" and said, "As a Jewish, politically involved Democrat, this language coming out of the mouth of a president of the United States is more than I can really comprehend."

In an April 12, 1972, talk with Haldeman, Ehrlichman and national security adviser Henry A. Kissinger, Nixon wondered whether Caspar W. Weinberger could be confirmed as attorney general. "He has some advantage, some advantage," Nixon said. "That is he's considered by many to be Jewish. And, uh, he doesn't deny it, does he?" The nomination was never made. Weinberger is Episcopalian.

The same year Nixon made the comments about Jews and the IRS, he

ordered White House aide Frederic V. Malek to compile the number of Jews at the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In 1988, Malek, then deputy chairman of the Republican National Committee, resigned after The Washington Post published a story about the incident.

Nixon resigned the presidency in August 1974 in the face of certain impeachment. Only 264 hours of the 3,700 hours of the secret tape recordings have been made public to date.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To read a transcript of another of the recently released Nixon tapes, about Watergate, click on the above symbol on the front page of The Post's site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.washingtonpost.com>