

Doc 10/30/76

Tapes Copied At Nixon Request, U.S. Aide Says

From News Dispatches

A Treasury Department official said last night that tape recordings made by President Nixon were duplicated for "designated agents" of the former President as required by a court order.

Richard Albrecht, the department's general counsel, made the statement in reply to a letter from Rep. Jack Brooks (D-Tex.), chairman of the House Government Operations Committee, who said he learned that tapes were checked out on Oct. 1, 4, 6, 7, and 14 and copied "with erasure-proof equipment."

The duplication, Brooks said, "appears to coincide with the period during which certain questions were raised in Congress and the news media concerning any role President Ford might have played in blocking a congressional investigation of Watergate before the 1972 election."

Deputy White House press secretary John Carlson said last night that at the request of Nixon, a federal court ordered the White House to make available about 18 tapes, all related to conversations "before July 21, 1972."

Brooks wrote to White House counsel Philip Buchen asking for an explanation. Albrecht replied last night in a letter stating that "I did not want a day to go by without correcting the false and misleading inferences contained in the press release issued by your office late this afternoon."

Brooks said in a routine inquiry about the status of tapes in a locked storage room, his committee was told by Albrecht that "members of the White House staff and a security officer were granted access "for the purpose of removing original tapes to be duplicated in the White House Communications Agency, after which they were returned."

In his reply to Brooks, Albrecht wrote that "there has been no access by President Ford or anyone on his behalf."

"Tapes removed for duplication for Mr. Nixon's agents at their request and as required by the court order covered only conversations prior to July 22, 1972, which was well before the House Banking and Currency Committee had proposed the investigation which you have referred to in your press release," Albrecht wrote.

"No other access has occurred," he said.