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Nixon's Anger Toward PBS Reported

Washington

Newly released White House papers depict former President Richard M. Nixon as being so incensed at what he regarded as left-wing bias that he ordered "all funds for public broadcasting be cut immediately."

Nixon was quoted as having made that statement in a September, 1971, "confidential, eyes only" memo by a White House aide, Jon M. Huntsman, to Peter Flanigan, assistant to the president. It said Nixon was greatly disturbed to learn that Robert MacNeil and Sander Vanocur would host a weekly public affairs program on public broadcasting.

Huntsman said Nixon considered this to be the last straw and "requested that all funds for public broadcasting be cut immediately. You should work this out so that the House Appropriations Committee gets the word."

The Office of Telecommunications Policy, then the chief presidential adviser in the field, said it would not be possible but suggested alternative courses for the future.

The information was contained in about 1000 pages of previously classified documents that were released yesterday under the Freedom of Information Act to Public Broadcasting Report, a publication of Television Digest Inc., and other organizations that had filed formal requests.

The papers show that those involved included domestic policy chief John D. Ehrlichman, chief of staff H.R. Haldeman, aide Charles Colson and Clay T. Whitehead, director of the telecommunications office.

Associated Press