

# Nixon Pressure on Public TV Alleged

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By Donald Sanders  
Associated Press

A new broadcasting newsletter says a memo it has obtained shows the Nixon administration tried to use political criticism of reporters to bring public television programming closer to White House wishes.

Public Broadcasting Report, an offshoot of Television Digest, says the plan was to persuade public television stations to bring pressure on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the agency that channels federal money to them.

In a report scheduled for publication today, the newsletter quotes from a memo it says was written in November 1971 to H. R. Haldeman, then White House chief of staff, by Clay Whitehead, then director of the Office of Telecommunications Policy at the White House.

The newsletter says the memo sketches a battle plan for encouraging speculation about salaries to be paid

Sander Vanocur and Robert MacNeill and putting out critical stories saying "their obvious liberal bias would reflect on public TV."

The memo is quoted as saying, "We will quietly encourage station managers throughout the country to put pressure on NPACT [National Public Affairs Center for Television] and CPB to balance their programming or risk the possibility of local stations not carrying the programming."

The memo adds, "Public TV stations throughout the country were unhappy that once again they were being given programs from Washington and New York without participating in the decision."

Public Broadcasting Report quoted Whitehead, now president of a California consulting firm, as saying "we never initiated anything like that." But he added that Nixon aides "felt public TV was inherently the enemy . . . It was an enemies mentality I faced at OTP.

"I had spent a lot of time talking to

people in public TV," Whitehead told the newsletter. "I knew there was a lot of concern about centralization. There were a lot of off-the-record complaints about CPB. Lots of stations were tremendously annoyed that the Vanocur program was put on . . . I don't think anything in this memo is inconsistent with what we said in public."

[The Washington Post was unable to reach Whitehead yesterday.]

Vanocur, now with ABC, was quoted as saying, "I suspected it was true but couldn't prove it. I knew something was going on."

MacNeill, a public TV newsman, called the memo "the most literal confirmation that they were out to sabotage a public broadcasting program . . . The really remarkable thing is that enough people stood up at the time . . . Public TV survived more direct onslaught from the White House than you can imagine happening, and it survived intact."