

Presidential Aides Never Mentioned Tape Troubles

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While details supplied by the White House about the case of two conversations that were said to have been recorded, and now reportedly were not, do not directly conflict with what has been made public about the recordings, statements by Presidential aides have made no previous mention of tape troubles.

One Presidential aide, Alexander P. Butterfield, said the recording equipment at Mr. Nixon's White House offices "was always working properly."

A former deputy assistant to the President, Mr. Butterfield testified before the Senate Watergate committee on July 16 that he had tested the recording devices at least three times to see if they were working properly.

Mr. Butterfield, who is now Federal Aviation Administrator, made no mention of having found anything amiss and said the Secret Service had made sure that the machines "were checked periodically and sufficiently."

And today Raymond C. Zum-

walt, the Secret Service agent who installed and tended the recorders, testified before Federal District Judge John J. Sirica that the machines had been checked daily, Monday through Friday.

Yet J. Fred Buzhardt, counsel to the President, told Judge Sirica that one machine, or the tape on it, apparently was broken last April 15 when the President had a crucial conversation with John W. Dean, 3d, who was dismissed the next day from his post as counsel to the President.

Warren Statement

Gerald L. Warren, deputy press secretary, told a news briefing on July 31 that "the President has listened to the tapes on July 4."

Mr. Butterfield told the Senate Watergate committee that the recording devices had been installed in the White House sometime in the middle of 1970. He was unsure exactly what month.

"They were installed, of course, for historical purposes, to record the President's business, and they were installed in his two offices, the Oval Office [in the White House proper] and the E.O.B. office [that is]

in the Executive Office Building adjoining the White House]," Mr. Butterfield said at the time.

The former Presidential aide went on to describe a series of "President's locator boxes," which were scattered at "about seven locations" in the offices at the White House and the Executive Office Building.

These, Mr. Butterfield said, were used to inform aides of the whereabouts of the President so that the recording machine in a specific location "was at least triggered." He said the two machines automatically picked up all conversations in the two rooms.

Mr. Butterfield said that additionally a manually operated recording device had been installed in the Cabinet meeting room. This device, he said, could be turned on merely by pushing a button on a telephone, an operation that could be made by several persons, including the President.

The aviation administrator, who left today for an international meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, testified further that recording devices had been placed on four telephones used by the President: in the Oval Office; his office in the

Executive Office Building, the Lincoln Room in the White House, which is sometimes used as a study, and the Aspen cabin at Camp David in the nearby Maryland hills.

"It was very difficult to pick up conversation in the Cabinet room (with the recording device there), and I never did check any of the telephones," Mr. Butterfield testified.

He went on to say, in response to a question, that all conversations had been recorded until at least March 14, 1973, when we left the White House.