

Those Nixon Tapes



Jack Anderson

ONE REASON Richard Nixon is fighting so hard to gain custody of the celebrated White House tapes, apparently, is to spare himself from new embarrassments.

Sources privy to conversations inside the oval office, while Nixon occupied it, recall some political discussions that the former President might want to keep out of the history books.

There was blunt, bold talk, for example, of "one-man rule" and of Nixon's "right" to run the country, our sources recall. These discussions were usually initiated, say our sources, by Nixon's major domo, H.R. Haldeman, who constantly sought to bolster the power of the White House.

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AS HALDEMAN rationalized it the President was the only official elected by all the people. Haldeman felt this gave Nixon a mandate, particularly after his 1972 landslide victory, to set the nation's policies.

Haldeman urged Nixon to ride roughshod over Congress, contending its members individually represented limited constituencies. Sometimes Haldeman advocated power plays that clearly violated the President's constitutional authority, witnesses recall.

During these discussions, Nixon not only agreed but made impulsive, intemperate remarks, our sources report. The language might even give

rise to charges that he sought dictatorial powers.

Our sources doubt, however, that he intended to go as far as the taped conversations might indicate. They blame Haldeman who, they say, had an appetite for power.

But they heard enough of the conversations to understand why Nixon would like first crack at the tapes before they become part of the permanent history of his administration.

As he acknowledged in a sworn deposition, he would like to arrange "for proper review of the tapes, which can only be undertaken by me and members of my family."

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FOOTNOTE: In fairness, the record should show that we are a party to the litigation over the White House tapes and that our attorney, William Dobrovir, conducted the deposition.

The controversial tapes were purchased and installed at the taxpayers' expense. The conversations that were recorded, we believe, should belong to the taxpayers. For Nixon carried on the people's business, not his own, in the oval office.

We also contend that Nixon cannot be trusted to screen the conversations. We need only cite the White House transcripts we released on April 29, 1974; the nation discovered later that they had been doctored and distorted.

Insert - as carried by WXPost, same date, filed W/gate:

→ ... members of my family."
Only his wife, Pat, his daughters and himself, he declared, could make "the delicate judgments with regard to what is private and what is personal and what is political and what is embarrassing, what is national security."

Footnote: In fairness ...