

A Saxbe Denial On Tape Report

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Washington

Attorney General-designate William B. Saxbe yesterday denied advocating destruction of the White House Watergate tapes if they proved to be incriminating.

The Republican senator from Ohio was quoted by the Hong Kong Standard on August 23 as saying during a speech to the local chapter of the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong:

"I think the President is right on standing on his rights not to release the tapes. I personally wish I had never heard of the tapes. If they're incriminating, they should be destroyed, and I'm sure they will; but I think he's right in saying that a president cannot be horsed around in the courts."

Saxbe, nominated last week by President Nixon to

head the Justice Department, issued this statement:

"If the question is, was I advocating any illegal activity in the Hong Kong speech, the answer obviously is no. In response to a question after the Hong Kong speech, I indicated that if there was illegal activity recorded on the tapes, I questioned whether such tapes would ever be forthcoming."

Saxbe also said he recalled indicating that because Mr. Nixon and others knew recording devices were installed in presidential offices, "I considered it highly unlikely that anything embarrassing would have been said under those circumstances."

Earlier, a spokesman for Saxbe said the senator did not recall making the statement attributed by the Hong Kong newspaper.

Associated Press