

Story says tapes 'not authentic'

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Preliminary studies by the court-appointed panel of electronics experts has found that two of the Watergate tapes may not be authentic and may actually be rerecordings of conversations, the Washington Post reported today.

Alexander Haig, White House chief of staff, told the Post last night, "there is no such report, tentative or otherwise, by the panel of experts."

The Post quoted sources at the White House and close to the special prosecutor's office as saying if the tapes in question are rerecordings it would be almost impossible to determine whether the original tapes were tampered with.

According to the Post, the

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panel of experts that said there were at least five erasures of the tape with the blank spot "has found technical indications that cast doubt on the authenticity of the two tapes" now in question.

The newspaper said the experts plan to conduct further tests before reporting their conclusions to U.S. District Judge John Sirica.

Haig called Post Executive Editor Benjamin Bradlee last night and said: "I have called the lawyers to Key Biscayne . . . we will probably go on television. This is a humdinger. I am putting you on notice that we feel this is a gross intrusion on grand jury proceedings."

The Post quoted White House Counsel J. Fred Buzhardt as saying he is "dead sure" that the original tape recordings were given to the court. "This is one I'm not in doubt about." He also called the Post story "irresponsible."