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The Worthless Tapes

To the Editor:

It is interesting to note that the excuse President Nixon has advanced for withholding the tapes of his conversations with John Dean and others invalidates their supposed purpose. It has been stated by the White House that the tapes were to serve as sources for historians working in the proposed Nixon library. However, since the President has stated that the tapes exonerate him but contain material which could be misconstrued by anyone else, of what value would they be to a historian using them some fifty or a hundred years hence? If they can only be understood correctly by someone who was a party to the original conversation, their usefulness as a historical source is severely limited, perhaps serving more to obscure than to clarify the incidents covered by them.

This indicates that Mr. Nixon should rethink and, perhaps, restate, either the original reason for the recording of Presidential conversations or the reason given to the Ervin committee for withholding the tapes of those conversations. But then, that assumes that logic plays a role in White House thinking these days.

(Asst. Prof.) ROBERT F. JONES
Fordham University
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