

Chief of CBS News Denies Bias

New York

Richard Salant, president of CBS News, has rebutted the White House suggestion that Walter Cronkite, news anchorman for CBS, showed partiality to newsmakers who were unfriendly to the Nixon administration.

In an internal memorandum, Salant pointed out that H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman had been invited to appear on "CBS Evening News" for special interviews by Cronkite when they were senior aides to President Nixon. However, Haldeman and Ehrlichman declined each invitation, Salant said.

The President himself has

a standing invitation, renewed from time to time, to be interviewed on the CBS newscast by Cronkite, but Mr. Nixon has never accepted, Salant said.

Salant's memo, dated November 7, was written two days after the disclosure by the New York Times of the existence of a carefully compiled list in the White House of alleged journalistic sins against Mr. Nixon.

The White House case against Cronkite was that during the past few years, he had interviewed only three persons on the newscast — John W. Dean III, Daniel Ellsberg and Archibald Cox — and all of them

on occasions when they were hostile to the President.

Salant's memorandum disputed the contention that there were only three interviews. Since 1970 Cronkite has had exclusive interviews with nine other newsmakers, including, most recently, Leon Jaworski, upon his nomination by the President as special prosecutor to succeed Cox, Salant noted.

Other persons interviewed included such heads of state as George Pompidou, Anwar Sadat, Golda Meir, Marshal

Tito and Willy Brandt.

Salant said that the specific journalistic circumstances of the interviews with Dean, Ellsberg and Cox had to be taken into account. The three men were "the chief actors in extraordinary running news stories" at the time, and in each case the appearance with Cronkite was the first exclusive broadcast interview "after they burst into the news," Salant said.

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