

IRS Head Denies Harassing Nixon Foes

By R. Gregory Nokes

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Commissioner Donald C. Alexander of the Internal Revenue Service says his own investigation shows the

agency wasn't used to punish enemies or reward friends of the Nixon administration.

Alexander, who became commissioner in late May, said in an interview that the

probe shows "the IRS did not engage in harassing enemies or in benefiting friends; it is not harassing enemies or benefiting friends and it is not about to in the future."

He declined to comment directly on a congressional probe of IRS but indicated he felt it would confirm his conclusions.

Congress initiated its investigation in June after former presidential counsel John W. Dean III told the Senate Watergate committee the Nixon administration was using the IRS to punish its enemies and reward its friends. Dean provided a list of individuals he said the administration regarded as political enemies.

Alexander said the agency checked out each name to determine whether there

had been harassment of these persons through their tax returns.

Alexander said he has never been asked by the White House to audit anyone's tax return. He said he could not speak for his predecessor, Johnnie Walters, but noted that the check gave the IRS a clean bill of health for the Walters' term of office as well as his own.

Alexander declined comment on the large income tax deductions taken by President Nixon because of donations of his public papers, but said: "I think generally people are concerned about the workings of the present tax system and whether the tax system is entirely fair, whether it provides certain deductions or exclusions which are fair to the public as a whole."