

Ford Says Tapes Lead To 'Honest Differences'

By MARJORIE HUNTER
Special to The New York Times

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., July 18—Vice President Ford disclosed today that he had listened to portions of two tape recordings of President Nixon's conversations with White House aides.

He concluded that it was "very understandable how there could be different interpretations of the words that were spoken."

For months, the Vice President had been saying that he would not listen to any Watergate tapes for fear he might be accused of using what he heard for political advantage.

But today, questioned at a news conference here, he disclosed that he had recently "asked to hear several of them and as a result I did."

Asked why he had changed his mind, Mr. Ford replied that he had recently "asked to hear several of them and as a result I did."

Asked why he had changed his mind, Mr. Ford replied that he was concerned about the discrepancies between White House and House Judiciary Committee versions of the tapes.

"This was after the discrepancies arose and it was my interest to find out the quality of the tapes, and after listening to parts of two of them, I came to the conclusion that it's very understandable how there could be a different interpretation of the words that were spoken," he said.

Asked which version he found more accurate, the Vice President replied: "I think you could read it either way."

'Have to Be a Genius'

He said that if "anybody can be 100 per cent certain that their version is any more accurate than the other version, you have to be a genius. I think there are some honest differences and I think they're understandable because of the texture of the transcripts... of the tapes themselves."

Asked where he had heard the tapes, Mr. Ford first said that he had not heard them at the White House or at the Judiciary Committee.

Minutes later, he said that on one occasion he listened to

the tapes at the White House and on another occasion listened to them elsewhere. He did not disclose where he had heard them the second time, nor did he identify which tapes he had heard.

The White House and the Judiciary Committee have issued transcripts of eight tapes that are substantially at variance.

While continuing today to defend Mr. Nixon against impeachment charges, Mr. Ford said he wished that the President would turn over all relevant material sought by the Judiciary Committee.

"I have repeatedly said publicly and I've indicated to the White House that I thought that ought to be the procedure, but the decision has been made otherwise," Mr. Ford said.

During his news conference today, Mr. Ford also indicated that there were certain incumbent Democrats he would not campaign against this fall.

'Good Democrats'

His views on this politically sensitive subject came in response to a question whether he agreed with Mr. Nixon's stand in favor of certain "good Democrats."

In a May 13 interview with Rabbi Baruch M. Korff, the text of which has just been published, Mr. Nixon said that "if there are good Democrats, and I know many good Democrats, I will be for them."

Mr. Ford was asked if he would campaign for any Congressional Democrats this fall.

"I'm not sure I'll go out and campaign for Democrats," he replied. "But what I'll do is not go into those districts where I think there is a first-class Democrat who, over the years it's been my personal observation, has done a fine job. I'll be highly selective as I campaign around the country this fall."

The Vice President's news conference came during a busy day in which large and friendly crowds welcomed him to his home town here. After an overnight stay, and his wife will return to Washington tomorrow.

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