

TAPE DESTRUCTION REPORTED REJECTED

WASHINGTON, July 23 (AP) — President Nixon rejected suggestions from his staff that he destroy any White House tapes that might prove politically and historically embarrassing, the Washington bureau of the Cox newspapers reported today.

The article quoted a July 25, 1973, memorandum to the President from his speech writer, Patrick J. Buchanan, who asked: "If there are conversations with confidential aides, such as Charles Colson or H. R. Bob Haldeman exclusive of the so-called Watergate tapes that are better left confidential forever — what then is the sense of their preservation?"

"Perhaps the President should be provided with a day-by-day log of his tape library, and himself separate the wheat from the chaff—from his own recollection — and have the latter burned."

Mr. Buchanan wrote his memo nine days after Alexander P. Butterfield, a former White House aide, disclosed in testimony before the Senate Watergate committee that Presidential conversations routinely were taped.

The article, written by David Kraslow and Eugene V. Risher, quoted a ranking official as saying Mr. Nixon rejected the advice on the ground "it would be wrong — ethically, politically, legally. In fact, the mere act of destroying the tapes might have been considered by many people enough to warrant impeachment."

The source also said: "For one thing, we knew there were a number of people around here who would not have stayed if that had happened. Those tapes could be evidence in an investigation already under way. The President understood that. We all understood that."