

Nixon Cites Tapes Precedent

Associated Press

Former President Nixon says he installed the extensive White House tape recording system at the urging of his predecessor, Lyndon B. Johnson, who Nixon said also had such a system.

"President Johnson said that the recordings he had made of his conversations while President had proved to be exceedingly valuable in preparing his memoirs and he urged that I reinstall the recording devices," Nixon said in an affidavit filed Monday with the U.S. District Court.

"Thereafter, I consented that this be done, having the expectation that I, like President Johnson, could retain during my life exclusive control over access to the recordings..."

The affidavit was filed in connection with Nixon's suit challenging a new law giving the government custody of his

records, including 880 reels of tape.

Nixon said he planned for the tapes to be placed in a presidential library after his death "with restrictions prohibiting access for a sufficiently long period of time so that no participant in conversations with me would incur any adverse effects."

He said he would have deleted conversations containing purely personal discussions.

The recordings, which include conversations bearing on the cover-up of White House involvement in the Watergate breakin, played a major role in Nixon's resignation Aug. 9.

Nixon said installation of the microphones in the White House, on his telephones, and at Camp David "stemmed in large part" from Johnson recommendations, made through a mutual friend who was not identified.

When the existence of the taping system was disclosed

to the Senate Watergate committee in 1973 by Alexander Butterfield, Nixon lawyer J. Fred Buzhardt said the system "is similar to that employed by the last administration."

But Johnson administration intimates denied any wholesale bugging. A source said yesterday that President Johnson was able to turn the system off and on at will, unlike the Nixon system that operated whenever a telephone receiver was lifted or a voice actuated the recorder.

In the affidavit, Nixon said, "President Johnson sent word to me that he had learned that as one of my first actions upon arriving at the White House I had ordered the removal of the recording devices he had installed there."

According to the affidavit, the recording systems were disconnected two days after Butterfield revealed their existence.