

## U.S. Report

# Presidents' Papers 'Should Be Public'

Washington

A commission that was created because of the controversy surrounding former President Nixon and the disposition of his papers recommended yesterday that all "job-related" papers of presidents, members of Congress and the federal judiciary become public property.

The final report of the National Study Commission on Records and Documents of Federal Officials, established by Congress in December, 1974, was submitted to the President and Congress yesterday. By tradition, the documents and records of high officials such as presidents have been treated as if they were the officeholder's personal property. Nixon originally claimed 42 million pages and the famous tape recordings as his own.

With respect to presidential papers, the report recommends that a president transfer his public papers to the national archivist at the conclusion of his term — and that he or a designated person "be empowered to place restrictions on the use of presidential public papers for up to 15 years after the conclusion of his office."

The report commented that the commission believes this "interval of control" is necessary to guarantee "full and frank advice" and to "encourage him and his colleagues" to keep adequate records "of their activities and deliberations."

This interval, it said, will reduce the likelihood of public access having a "chilling effect on both the keeping of records and the candor of advisers."

The report defines personal papers — such as diaries, letters to family and friends and "other papers" created for personal use "rather than in connection with his presidential duties" — as a president's personal property. It concedes that it is "difficult and sometimes impossible" to entirely separate personal from official or political activities.

At the end of the 15 years, the report recommended public access to the material without the procedures and time-consuming processes required by the Freedom of Information Act. This access should be "subject only to restrictions necessary in the interests of national security" or to protect against "a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy."

The report recommended that the "job-related materials" of Congress, the Supreme Court and the rest of the federal judiciary should be subject to the access provisions of the information act. This "will substantially increase the citizen's capacity to find out about the official acts of the government."

New York Times