

WHITE HOUSE TAPES
4TH CHRONOLOGICAL RELEASE
JULY 1972 – OCTOBER 1972



Nixon Presidential Materials Staff

National Archives and Records Administration

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NIXON WHITE HOUSE TAPES

FOURTH CHRONOLOGICAL SEGMENT JULY – OCTOBER 1972

This group of 154 Nixon White House tapes, released on December 10, 2003, consists of the conversations which took place in the Oval Office, in the President's Old Executive Office Building (EOB) office, and on certain telephones in the Oval Office, the President's EOB office, and in the Lincoln Sitting Room in the residence of the White House. This group of White House tapes also includes room conversations and telephone conversations recorded in the President's study in Aspen Lodge at the Camp David Presidential retreat in Maryland. In all, there are 3073 conversations totaling approximately 238 hours of listening time. These conversations were recorded, for the most part, from July 1, 1972 to October 31, 1972. However, a few conversations included as part of the "October 1972" tapes were recorded in November 1972. For archival purposes, they are included in this installment.

According to the terms of the 1996 Tapes Settlement Agreement between the National Archives, President Nixon's Estate, and Public Citizen, the Nixon Presidential Materials Staff has now processed and released to the public six installments of Nixon White House Tapes. The installments are

1. Abuse of Governmental Power (AOGP) conversations. These tapes consisted of excerpted portions of conversations that documented evidence of abuses of governmental power. These excerpted portions were recorded between February 1971 and July 1973. This first installment was released to the public in October 1996 and totaled 201 hours of listening time.
2. Cabinet Room conversations. These conversations were recorded in the Cabinet Room in the White House between February 1971 and July 1973. This second installment was released to the public in November 1997 and totaled 154 hours of listening time.
3. First Chronological Segment. These conversations were recorded between February and July 1971. They were released to the public in October 1999 and totaled 445 hours of listening time.
4. Second Chronological Segment. These conversations were recorded between August and December 1971. They were released to the public in October 2000 and totaled 420 hours of listening time.
5. Third Chronological Segment. These conversations were recorded between January and June 1972. They were released to the public in February 2002 and totaled 425 hours of listening time.

Combined, the National Archives has now released to the public approximately 2017 hours worth of conversations from the Nixon White House tapes. According to the terms of the 1996 Tapes Settlement Agreement, the National Archives will release the fifth and final chronological segment (November 1972 to July 1973) in 2005. All of these tapes are in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and are part of the Nixon presidential historical materials under the provisions of the Presidential Recordings and Materials

Preservation Act of 1974 (PRMPA) (44 USC 2111 note). Access to the Nixon Presidential materials and the tapes is governed by the PRMPA and its implementing public access regulations.

A Brief History of the White House Taping System

In February 1971, the United State Secret Service (USSS), at the request of the President, installed listening devices in the White House. They placed seven microphones in the Oval Office: five in the President's desk, and one on each side of the fireplace. They placed two microphones in the Cabinet Room under the table near the President's chair. The Secret Service technicians wired all devices to central mixers which were then connected to recorders in an old locker room in the White House basement.

In April 1971, the Secret Service technicians installed four microphones in the President's office in the EOB. These microphones were located in the President's desk and wires led to a mixer and recorders in an adjoining room. The Secret Service also tapped the telephones in the Oval Office, in the President's EOB office, and in the Lincoln Sitting Room. These telephone conversations were recorded by tapping the telephone lines from the White House switchboard and relaying the conversations to recorders in a closet in the basement of the residence.

Finally, in May 1972, the Secret Service set up a taping system in the President's study in Aspen Lodge at Camp David. There were three separate recording systems put in place. A single microphone recorded conversations taking place in the study. The President's telephone on the President's desk was tapped as was the telephone on the study table.

This was a secret taping system maintained by the Secret Service. Only President Nixon, H.R. Haldeman, and a few of the President's close personal assistants knew the system existed. One of its key features was that the recording equipment in the Oval Office, the EOB office, at Camp David, and on the telephones was sound activated, operating without a conscious decision by the President to record a specific conversations. Most participants were unaware that their conversations were being recorded. The system was tied to the Presidential Locator System and would only activate if the president were present in the room. It was designed to continue recording for fifteen to thirty seconds after the President left the room.

The Cabinet Room recording system operated somewhat differently. It was a manual rather than a sound activated system. It was activated by Alexander Butterfield, a Special Assistant to the President who managed the President's activities in the West Wing of the White House. Butterfield activated the system from a switch on his desk (although the Secret Service also placed on/off switches on either side of the President's chair at the Cabinet Room table). When Butterfield inadvertently left the system "on," the tape recorders captured non-historical conversations as well as hours of room noise.

Tapes Processing

The Nixon Presidential Materials Staff (NLNS) has archivally processed the sound recordings for public access under the PRMPA, its implementing regulations, and the 1996 Tapes

Settlement Agreement. Archival processing included duplicating the recordings to preserve the original tapes, enhancing the sound quality of the tape copies, describing the contents of the tapes by creating tape subject logs and other finding aids, and reviewing the tapes for restrictions. The PRMPA regulations define eight restriction categories. In accordance with PRMPA and the 1996 Tapes Settlement Agreement, NARA restricts the content if release of the information would:

- Violate a Federal statute or agency policy (restriction category “A”);
- Reveal national security information (restriction category “B”);
- Violate an individual’s rights (pending) (restriction category “C”);
- Constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy (restriction category “D”);
- Disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information (category “E”);
- Disclose investigatory/law enforcement information (restriction category “F”);
- Disclose purely private and personal information, as defined by the PRMPA (restriction category “G”);
- Disclose non-historical material (restriction category “H”).

In some cases, NLNS withheld certain portions which were so unintelligible that the staff could not adequately review them for release at this time. These portions are noted on the tape subject log as “[Unintelligible].” For all of the withdrawals (except those removed because they were unintelligible), the tape subject log will note the relevant restriction category and the duration of the withdrawal. For national security withdrawals, the tape subject log will also indicate the main topic or topics of the withdrawal. Portions of conversations determined to fall within the “G” restriction category were deleted from the tapes and returned to the Nixon Estate, in accordance with the PRMPA. All withdrawals, including unintelligible withdrawals, are identified on the tapes by a ten second tone.

In this installment, the National Archives is releasing 154 White House tapes recorded between July 1 and November 3, 1972 totaling approximately 238 hours of listening time. In the course of processing the tapes, the Nixon Presidential Materials Staff restricted a total of approximately 292 hours worth of conversations. According to the PRMPA, the National Archives must segregate for return to the Nixon Estate those portions of conversations that deal solely with personal and political matters that have no bearing on the constitutional and statutory duties of the Presidency. As the 1972 Presidential campaign was approaching during this time frame and was a major source of discussion on the White House tapes, archivists determined that approximately 264 hours required restriction under restriction category “G.” In the course of processing these recordings, the archivists determined that thirteen hours required restriction as “non-historical room noise” (restriction category “H”) and that fourteen hours required restriction because the conversations were too unintelligible to review. The archivists withheld only six minutes for restriction category “D” (release would clearly constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy of a living person). Lastly, the archivists only restricted twenty minutes worth of conversation for reasons of national security (restriction category “B”). In large part, this was due to Executive Order 12958.

Description of the July – October 1972 Conversations

Conversations in the fourth chronological segment involve a wide variety of participants including White House staff members H.R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, Charles W. Colson, Henry A. Kissinger, Alexander M. Haig, Ronald Ziegler, and Rose Mary Woods. They also include members of the Cabinet, other department and agency personnel, Members of Congress, foreign leaders and dignitaries, members of the press, celebrities and athletes, members of advocacy groups, and the general public. Conversations include a wide variety of issues and document the daily routine of the President and his staff, and include discussions on public relations, the 1972 Presidential Campaign, appointments, ceremonial events, polling information, developments in Vietnam and at the Paris Peace Talks, presidential statements and speeches, and the President's schedule.

The Vietnam War and Peace Negotiations

The Vietnam War and the Paris Peace Talks were major topics of discussion during this time period. This installment begins in July 1972 with several discussions about Congressional efforts (including the Cooper-Church amendment) to withdraw U.S. troops from Indochina by a date contingent upon the return of American prisoners of war (POWs) and a cease-fire. In August, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger returned to Paris to meet with Le Duc Tho for peace negotiations and to Saigon to meet with South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu to discuss the negotiations in Paris. Kissinger and the President also discussed Ramsey Clark's efforts to free U.S. POWs. In September, Kissinger returned to Paris and reported back to Nixon that there has been substantial progress. Kissinger returned to Washington and he and Nixon detailed the progress and discussed efforts to win Thieu's acceptance. There are many significant conversations about Vietnam and the Paris peace talks in October 1972. Kissinger and the President discussed Alexander Haig's unsuccessful efforts to persuade Thieu to accept the new proposals. Later in the month, Kissinger reported from Paris that he and Le Duc Tho reached an understanding. There are several conversations detailing the agreement as well as several conversations discussing the logistics for planning the signing ceremonies. During this time frame, Ellsworth Bunker, the U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam, informed the White House that Thieu did not support the agreement. There are several conversations discussing this problem and the other problems that arise from his refusal. They discuss options and strategies to bring pressure on Thieu to support the agreement. After the North Vietnamese publicized the agreement, Thieu publicly repudiated the agreement. Kissinger and the President discussed these events and planned for Kissinger to hold a press conference. Following Kissinger's "peace is at hand" press conference on October 26, 1972, there are a number of conversations detailing the public relations aspects of the press conference, strategies to keep the agreement from falling apart, and getting Thieu to accept it. At different times in October, the President met with former Army Chief of Staff William Westmoreland and incoming Army Chief of Staff Creighton Abrams to discuss the military situation in Vietnam and advise the President on their views of the Paris peace talks.

U.S. – Soviet Union Relations

Included in this segment are conversations relating to U.S. – Soviet Union relations. One of the main issues discussed was legislation proposed by Senator Henry (“Scoop”) Jackson and Congressman Charles Vanik granting Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status to the Soviet Union if the Soviets relaxed restrictions on Jewish emigration. On September 30, 1972, the U.S. and the Soviet Union signed an interim agreement on the limitation of offensive nuclear arms (SALT) at the White House. There are many conversations between the President and Henry Kissinger detailing the negotiations and the provisions leading up to the ceremony. There are also many discussions regarding the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) in Europe with Members of Congress, State Department officials and members of the White House staff, and European leaders. The President met with General Andrew Goodpaster to discuss North Atlantic Treaty (NATO) developments and US - European relations. He also discussed US - European trade relations with the Council on International Economic Policy. The European Security conference was another topic of discussion at this time.

There are also several conversations regarding the President’s decision to sell grain and other agricultural products to the Soviet Union. Democratic Presidential candidate George McGovern charged that the Nixon administration had agreed to steep discounts in sales prices that were not available to others. He charged that the sale was politically motivated to help the President in Farm Belt states. In addition to conversations about the grain sale itself, there are several conversations discussing McGovern’s charges and devising public responses.

Other Foreign Relations and Meetings with Foreign Leaders

The President met with UN Ambassador George Bush and Secretary of State William Rogers to discuss terrorism, and the upcoming UN General Assembly session. In September, there are a few discussions of the massacres occurring in Uganda and Burundi. Also in September, there are many conversations about the murder of Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in Munich Germany.

Although the President was gearing up for his re-election campaign and spent considerable time towards planning and directing his campaign, he did meet with a number of foreign leaders and dignitaries. In July, he met with Brazilian finance Minister Antonio Netto at the White House and with French Defense Minister Michel Debre. In August, he met with newly elected Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka in Hawaii. In September, the President met with Indonesian Minister of State General Marador Panggebean, Polish Foreign Minister Stefan Olszowski, British Foreign Secretary Sir Alec Douglas Hume, and French Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann. On October 27, he met with Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma to detail the Paris Peace Agreement and enlist his support. During this time period, the President also met with a number of Soviet officials: Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. Anatoliy Dobrynin, Health Minister Boris Petrovskiy, Minister of the Maritime Fleet Timofey Guzhenko, and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko.

1972 Campaign

Topics of conversation often centered on the upcoming Presidential election. There are numerous discussions about Democratic nominee George McGovern, his policies and public statements. These conversations, often between the President, his chief political aide Charles Colson, his Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman, Committee to Re-Elect the President Clark MacGregor, and other officials from the Republican party, also reflect Nixon's views and campaign strategy. Nixon and his staff talked about responding to McGovern's platform on ending the Vietnam War, amnesty, and his charges in the "Watergate" scandal. Both the Democratic National Convention and the Republican National convention are discussed in August 1972. There are a number of conversations regarding George Wallace and his withdrawal from the Presidential race. In addition, there are conversations regarding McGovern's decision to replace Senator Thomas Eagleton as his Vice Presidential nominee with R. Sargeant Shriver. The President's efforts to create a New American Majority are also recorded as he met with several prominent Democrats – from Labor leaders to politicians— seeking their support for his campaign and his policies.

Watergate – Related Conversations

The "Watergate" investigation also plays a large role during this time period and there are many conversations regarding the various investigations and developments. Most of these Watergate and Abuses of Governmental Power (AOGP) conversations were previously released as excerpted conversations as part of the RG 460 – Watergate Special Prosecution Force (WSPF) tapes release in 1991 and the AOGP tape releases in 1993 and 1996. Some additional excerpts were declassified according to the provisions of Executive Order 12958 and released to the public in 1999. These conversations are now released in context with all surrounding discussion.

The discussions begin in July as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) continued its investigation into the break-in at the Democratic National Committee office in the Watergate office complex in Washington D.C. There are a number of conversations discussing the progress of this investigation. In response to this investigation, the President, H. R. Haldeman, and other close aides devised strategies and responses to counter the investigation. As the public became more aware of the scandal and media outlets began to cover investigation developments, the White House devised a public relations strategy to counter the reports. There are several conversations detailing these meetings. There are several conversations detailing the Grand Jury investigation into the break-in as well as the Democrats civil suit against the Committee to Re-Elect the President (CRP). After the indictments were handed down (to the five burglars and former White House staffers Howard Hunt and Gordon Liddy), there are conversations pertaining to those indictments and renewed efforts to contain the investigation and implement a public relations strategy to counter press stories, Democratic party charges, and George McGovern's charges.

There are many conversations about "dirty tricks" and Donald Segretti's role after the *Washington Post* published stories detailing the Committee to Re-Elect the President's "dirty tricks" operation against Democratic candidates in the primaries. There are additional conversations after the *Post* and the *New York Times* published stories linking Segretti to White

House appointments secretary Dwight Chapin. Additional stories then linked the President's personal attorney Herbert Kalmbach and CRP Treasurer Hugh Sloan to these "dirty tricks." The *Post* reported that Sloan, in his Grand Jury testimony, implicated Haldeman in authorizing the funding of the "dirty tricks." There are several conversations between the President and his aides on devising a public relations plan after these stories were published. In addition to following the developments of the FBI and Grand Jury investigations, they are concerned with the revelations and its possible effect on the election. In September, Dan Rather did an in-depth report on the break-in on the CBS Evening News, and on the eve of the election in late October, Walter Cronkite televised a 30 minute Special Report on Watergate on CBS. There are several conversations in the White House on how to respond to these press reports and their effect on the election.

Domestic Topics, Issues, and Meetings

Domestically, there are several topics of importance detailed on the tapes during this period. There are significant conversations relating to Hurricane Agnes and the extensive damage it caused in Willkes-Barre Pennsylvania. Nixon and other members of the White House staff were particularly distressed by press reports documenting the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) poor response. In one conversation in the aftermath, HUD Secretary George Romney offered his resignation. There are also substantive discussions about legislation pending in Congress: busing, the Clean Water Bill, veterans benefits (health care and education), and welfare reform. Conversations document the President's decision to veto the Clean Water Bill (which was then passed over his veto). Many conversations detail the President's concern about the budget deficit and the need to control government spending. In meetings with his chief domestic policy advisor John Ehrlichman, the Cost of Living Council, and other economic aides, they discussed the President's economic policies and his economic stabilization program. There were also considerable discussions on options regarding welfare reform legislation (H. R. 1). In other domestic matters, the President met with White House staffer David Young and John S.D. Eisenhower in August 1972 to discuss the Interagency Classification Review Panel to demonstrate the President's efforts to declassify government records.

As the 1972 Presidential election neared, the President and his closest White House aides made plans for the second term as polls showed the President with commanding leads. The President and H. R. Haldeman held many discussions about the need to re-organize the executive branch into fewer Cabinet Departments. At Camp David and at the White House, they made plans to ask for the resignations of all appointees. As part of the President's second term plans, he gave several speeches talking about the need to create a "New American Majority." Part of these plans included spending cuts on domestic programs to control budget deficits as well as public relations efforts to increase a sense of pride and patriotism. There are several conversations documenting these plans and policies during October.

The President also met with an interesting array of people and groups during this time period. In July, he met with Johnny Cash and Armand Hammer. He also met with Gerald Ford and Hale Boggs to discuss their report of their trip to the People's Republic of China. In August, he met with former professional football players Jim Brown and Ollie Matson, boxer Floyd Patterson, baseball pitcher Mickey Lolich, minister Oral Roberts, the Carpenters, and Miss Teenage

America Colleen Fitzpatrick. In September, the President met with Ray Charles, and John and James Roosevelt (Franklin D. Roosevelt's sons), New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller and former Alaska Governor and Department of the Interior Secretary Walter Hickel. He also met with two Miss Americas: Terry Anne Meeuwsen and Laurie Lee Schafer. In October, he met with Gale Sayers, and James Brown. Throughout this period, the President also met with important labor leaders, members of veterans groups, and key supporters from various interest groups.

Tape Logs and Transcripts

In the course of processing the tapes, NLNS staff prepared tape subject logs as researcher aids to follow conversations. Each log contains the tape number, the conversation, the tape location, the date and time of the conversation, and the names of the participants involved. The logs include activity statements which document when someone entered or left a room. In instances when there is a telephone conversation in one of the offices, the logs also contain cross references to the corresponding telephone recording, noting the tape and conversation number. Some of the conversations contain partial transcripts which were prepared by the Watergate Special Prosecution Force for use during their investigation and various Watergate trials. In addition, there are a few conversations with other partial transcripts. These were created by NLNS staff in response to court orders for special access to information contained on the tapes. In cases where partial transcripts exist, the tape subject log will contain a notation where a transcript has been created for that particular portion of conversation.

Variations in sound quality can produce wide variations in what is heard. Even though transcripts may be prepared with great care and substantial effort, many points of ambiguity are inevitable, and erroneous or different interpretations from transcripts are always possible. As a general policy, the National Archives does not create transcripts of conversations, and considers these existing transcripts to be an interpretation of the record rather than the record itself. NARA considers the actual tapes to be the record, and strongly urges users to listen to the tapes in forming their own interpretation.

Conversation Numbers

During the processing of the White House tapes, NLNS identified and assigned a unique number to each recorded conversation. The conversation number consists of an initial number which identifies the reel of original White House tape. Each conversation on each reel is further identified by a unique number, with the first conversation on a particular reel labeled "1," the second conversation labeled "2," the third conversation labeled "3," and so on sequentially until the tape goes blank.

When listening to an Oval Office, an EOB office, or a Camp David Hard Wire tape recording, there may be instances where the President or someone else in the room places or receives a telephone call while a meeting is in progress. The tape subject log identifies each instance by an activity statement, alerting the listener as to what is occurring, and lists a cross reference, if there is one, indicating the tape and conversation number for that telephone conversation on the White House telephone tapes. Likewise, the tape subject logs for the White House tapes indicate the

cross reference, if there is one, with the corresponding conversation from an Oval Office, an EOB office, or Camp David Hard Wire conversation.

Audio Quality

The audio quality of the recordings varies greatly. In general, conversations recorded in the Oval Office are of good audio quality; those recorded in the President's EOB office are of poorer sound quality. Conversations recorded on the telephone are generally very audible; however, in some instances, the recording equipment malfunctioned, and those conversations are barely audible. In some instances, background noises, such as footsteps or the clinking of coffee cups and glasses, make parts of the tape segments more difficult to understand.

The National Archives duplicated the original tapes using both analog and digital technology for preservation purposes and to produce copies with improved sound quality and audibility for the review of the conversations. Digital Audio Cassettes (DATs) were used for review purposes. Analog cassette copies were then produced from DATs for researcher use.

Executive Order 12958 and Declassification

In processing these recordings for public access, the National Archives implemented Executive Order 12958, which mandates declassification of materials more than twenty-five years old. Using agency guidelines, on-site visits from agency declassification specialists, detailed reference information, and textual records from the Nixon Presidential materials, the NLNS staff was able to review substantial amounts of material. The National Archives determined that only twenty minutes required restriction out of 238 hours in this segment. These 26 withdrawals are indicated on the various tape subject logs. In addition, for national security withdrawals, the tape subject log indicates the main subject or subjects that have been withdrawn.

Other Finding Aids

In addition to the tapes subject logs, NLNS has created the following lists to assist researchers in their work:

Conversation List: a complete list of each conversation found on the tapes, including: date and time of the conversation, the names of participants (by individual or described by group), the length of the released portion of the conversation, and the reference cassette where the conversation can be located, by cassette number and segment number.

Name List: a list of names found on the tape subject logs and the tape number(s) where the person is mentioned or is a participant.

Geographic Names List: a list of place names found on the tapes subject logs and the tape number where the place is mentioned.

Acronyms List: a list of commonly used acronyms found on the tape subject logs and the tape number where the acronym is mentioned.