

Klein Quits Job With Nixon, Will Join Metromedia, Inc.

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By Lou Cannon

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Herbert G. Klein, one of President Nixon's oldest associates remaining in government, quit yesterday to become a vice president of Metromedia, Inc.

He served Mr. Nixon through three presidential campaigns and as communications director since 1969. He stepped down with a warm letter of praise from the President that described Klein as having "achieved the vital goal of effectively informing the American people about their government."

Though Klein's departure had been expected for many months, he left at a time when an atmosphere of uncertainty surrounds the entire White House communications operation.

Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler has increasingly turned over daily White House briefings to his deputy, Gerald L. Warren. This week Ziegler accompanied Henry Kissinger on negotiations with the North Vietnamese in Paris, purportedly to increase Ziegler's "understanding of this particular series of negotiations."

Warren said yesterday that it is possible that Ziegler may make more such trips in the future. The White House press secretary's future has been a frequent subject of speculation both within and outside the

administration ever since disclosures in the Watergate scandal which led to resignation of a number of top Nixon aides.

Ziegler, acting on information he said had been furnished him, had over an 11-month period steadfastly denied White House involvement in the Watergate burglary or the subsequent cover-up.

White House sources indicated that it was likely that Ziegler would continue in charge of a reorganized communications division and given larger responsibilities. This presumably will mean that he will be less involved in direct briefing of reporters.

Warren and Ken W. Clawson, now a deputy under Klein, reportedly will continue as deputy press secretaries with Clawson taking over a portion of Klein's duties.

For his part, Klein made no secret of the fact that he was glad to be leaving.

"It's very difficult to leave at this time because I think all of us have to do everything to help the President," Klein said. "On the other hand, on a personal basis I've long wanted to get back into industry. I'm looking forward to it."

Klein will become Metromedia vice president for corporate relations with headquarters in Los Angeles. In making the announcement of Klein's departure

Warren said he would continue to assist the administration from time to time on a consulting basis.

A letter from Klein to the President released by the White House praised Mr. Nixon for leaving "an indelible stamp on history, both internationally and domestically."

Klein, a 55-year-old former editor with the San Diego-based Copley Newspapers, is the last of a long line of oldtime California associates to leave the administration. The list includes Murray Chotiner, Robert S. Finch, Patricia Hitt and, most prominently, H. R. Haldeman, whose resignation the President accepted April 30 in the wake of disclosures of a Watergate cover-up.

At first, Klein was the top spokesman for the Nixon administration. But his role was gradually supplanted by Ziegler, 34, who increasingly became involved with policy issues.

Klein's most important achievement for the administration from a public relations standpoint was to bring the President into meetings with editors and publishers in various regions of the country rather than holding Washington press conferences. Klein also provided newspapers around the country with frequent administration position papers on various issues.



By Charles Del Vecchio—The Washington Post

Klein takes over the President's desk long enough for a photograph with him.