

Rogers Changed Mind on Olsen

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Secretary of State William P. Rogers did an about-face on his initial offer to back Arthur J. Olsen's appointment as the department's spokesman, it became known yesterday.

Rogers first told Olsen, after receiving a letter from Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) declaring the appointment "personally obnoxious," that he could have the option of rejecting the post or going ahead with it with the secretary's backing.

Although Olsen chose taking the new job, Rogers later called to tell him he had decided to leave the issue to Robert J. McCloskey, the secretary's personal assistant and press chief for the department, and William B. Macomber Jr., deputy under secretary for administration.

Macomber at one point tried to get Goldwater to see Olsen but the senator refused. Goldwater objected to Olsen because of a story he had written from Bonn, West Germany, in 1964 when he worked for the New York Times.

The story said Goldwater, then about to be nominated by the Republicans for the presidency, had been in "frequent and friendly" correspondence with a right-wing German leader, Hans Christoph Seeböhm. Goldwater denied the story at the time.

Yesterday Olsen put out a statement declaring that his source has been Seeböhm himself. Olsen also noted that Seeböhm a day later denied the story and that he, Olsen, reported the denial, which was printed in the Times.

Olsen also said a Seeböhm associate later explained that Seeböhm had taken a personal interest in an exchange between officials of the Christian Social Union (Bavarian wing of the Christian Demo-

cratic Party) and members of Goldwater's campaign staff, but probably had exaggerated the contact in telling Olsen about it.

Acknowledges Complaint

McCloskey yesterday acknowledged Goldwater's complaint about Olsen's appointment but said that Rogers "was prepared to support this appointment if it were to go through." He announced the withdrawal of the appointment as an agreement between himself and Olsen after consultation with Macomber and others.

Goldwater has been out of town.

McCloskey also said that after receipt of the second Goldwater letter to Rogers, saying the secretary would face trouble if he went through with the appointment, "we formed some judgments."

It was said yesterday that a consideration was how Olsen could function as the department's official spokesman if he were to be vulnerable to criticism for any remarks his job would require him to make.

When he was asked whether the Olsen case would be a precedent to "suspend, demote or reassign" other department employees considered obnoxious by a member of Congress, McCloskey told the newsmen that "the record will show your remarks."

Spoke to Ziegler

McCloskey acknowledged talking about the case to White House Press Secretary Roland L. Ziegler but he said he did not personally know of a White House role in withdrawing the appointment.

At San Clemente, Calif., Ziegler referred queries to McCloskey. He did say, however, that "the President did not intervene. He was not involved whatever . . . the President did not receive a letter from Sen. Goldwater. The decision was made without consulting the White House."