

KLEIN IS EXPECTED TO QUIT POST SOON

Last Member of the Original
Nixon Team Reported to
Be Joining Metromedia

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SAN DIEGO, May 25—The last survivor of President Nixon's original Presidential campaign team—a political associate for more than 25 years—is expected to join the exodus of top Administration officials soon.

Herbert G. Klein, the White House Director of Communications, has informed friends and former newspaper colleagues here that he plans to join the Metromedia broadcasting group this summer as a vice president based in Los Angeles. He would be involved principally in Metromedia's search for newspaper properties.

In Washington, Mr. Klein said he had signed no formal contract, had set no firm departure date and still had two other offers under consideration. But it was understood that the Metromedia position was almost certain to be his choice.

To Leave By August

In talking with his West Coast friends, Mr. Klein indicated that he expected to be leaving the White House before the end of July, bringing to an end an association that began in 1946 when he helped a young Richard M. Nixon, then just out of the Navy, run for Congress from what was then California's 12th Congressional District.

Mr. Klein had intended to depart earlier this year, but he

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delayed his action lest it be interpreted as a desertion of his chief at the peak of the Watergate scandal. There is no indication at this time as to a successor to Mr. Klein or, for that matter, if there will be one.

Under a plan that was to have been announced before the Watergate disclosures precipitated a staff shake-up, Mr. Klein was to have resigned as communications director, to be succeeded by his deputy, Ken W. Clawson, in an office that was to be part of the highly centralized White House staff operations put together by H.R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, both of whom have resigned.

That plan has been postponed indefinitely and the future of the operation is uncertain.

Although the once strong friendship of the President and Mr. Klein has been deteriorating for several years, the 55-year old San Diegan has refrained from expressing any bitterness toward the President in discussing his forthcoming resignation.

Instead, he has been outspoken in blaming former Presidential advisors John D. Ehrlichman and H. R. Haldeman not only for "torpedoing" him, but for being largely responsible for what he calls a "terrible betrayal" of the President through their association with the Watergate scandal and subsequent attempts to cover up the involvement of key White House figures in that affair.

A Visitor's Comment

A member of the staff of The San Diego Tribune, where Mr. Klein was formerly editor, visited him in Washington recently and said:

"Herb in recent years has been relegated more and more to the bleachers by the Handelman-Ehrlichman inner guard but now the bleachers, in the light of Watergate, appear to have been among the best seats in the Nixon ball park."

In recent weeks the 55-year-old communications director has made a number of speeches defending the President's integrity and insisting that Mr. Nixon neither ordered nor had knowledge of the Watergate affair.

Mr. Klein has escaped any involvement in the scandal, perhaps because of his estrangement from the Haldeman-Ehrlichman-Dean group around the President and his virtual exclusion from Mr. Nixon's 1972 campaign for re-election.

However, two men formerly on his communications staff who later were assigned to work with the Committee for the Re-election of the President, Jeb Stuart Magruder and Herbert Porter, have been linked to the secret campaign fund used to pay for the Watergate bugging and other political espionage.

With Nixon in 1950

Mr. Klein worked on behalf of Mr. Nixon when he ran for the Senate in 1950 against Helen Gahagan Douglas, a Democrat, in a particularly bitter campaign during which he accused her of being "soft on Communism," and again two years later when Mr. Nixon ran for Vice President.

After those successes, Mr. Klein had the misfortune of being associated in the role of press secretary with Mr. Nixon's unsuccessful bid for the Presidency in 1960 against John F. Kennedy and again in 1962 when Mr. Nixon was defeated in his efforts to unseat Edmund G. Brown as Governor of California.

Mr. Nixon's regard for his press spokesman cooled perceptibly after his 1962 defeat for the governorship, when he angrily informed newsmen that he was retiring from politics and "you won't have Nixon to kick around any more."

Working under Mr. Klein in

that unsuccessful 1962 campaign was an eager young man of 23 who had been studying marketing at the University of Southern California and working as a guide at Disneyland. His name was Ronald L. Ziegler.

Later, Mr. Ziegler went to work for the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency in Los Angeles, as an executive assistant to Mr. Haldeman who is said to have decided, long before the 1968 Presidential campaign, that Mr. Ziegler should replace Mr. Klein.

Mr. Nixon was persuaded, according to reliable sources among Mr. Klein's friends here, that inept management of the press by Mr. Klein was in large measure responsible for his defeats in 1960 and 1962.

Mr. Klein continued, however, to be a part of the Nixon 1968 campaign entourage, owing in large measure to influential California Republicans such as Robert H. Finch and the importance of the state's large delegate and electoral votes. But his friendship with Mr. Nixon was never rehabilitated and his authority came to be more and more submerged by Mr. Nixon's reliance upon a new coterie of advertising and television advisers.

Early in the 1968 campaign, Mr. Haldeman and others of the new "inner circle" that had sprung up convinced Mr. Nixon that he needed as his press secretary a specialist in "merchandising and image-building" and that Mr. Ziegler was that man.

On Inauguration Day in 1969, Mr. Ziegler became, at 29, the youngest man ever to hold the position of White House press secretary.

According to the version current among Mr. Klein's friends, the President's inner circle of advisers had no place in their White House planning for Mr. Klein, but the President insisted

that because of their longtime friendship—and the importance of California to his re-election to a second term—a spot must be found for him.

As a result, a new post was created at the White House with the impressive title of Director of Communications and, according to Mr. Klein, he was told by Mr. Haldeman that the President felt he was the only man who could adequately fill the spot.

For a time there was speculation that Mr. Klein would become the "news czar" of the Nixon Administration, directing and coordinating White House press relations, while Mr. Ziegler functioned as the day-to-day spokesman. Additionally, it was speculated, he would keep a watchful eye on the press policies and practices of other administrative departments and agencies.

Mr. Klein was led to believe that he would share in White House policy making, much as James Hagerty did when he was press secretary to President Eisenhower.

Advice Not Welcomed

Actually, Mr. Klein's role as Director of Communications soon proved to be—as the new men around Mr. Nixon had intended—something quite different. He occupied a top-echelon position on the White House table of organization on the same level as Mr. Ehrlichman, Mr. Haldeman, Henry Kissinger and others who enjoyed easy, direct access to Mr. Nixon's oval office.

But Mr. Klein found that he neither had access to the President nor was his counsel welcomed by those through whom he was forced to channel his counsel.

In the 1972 campaign, his activities were limited mostly to assignments in California, and it was his misfortune to have



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worked assiduously to bring last year's Republican convention to San Diego, before that idea collapsed under the weight of disclosures concerning secret financial commitments made to the Republicans by the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation.

While Mr. Ziegler came to be the sole authoritative voice of the President, and rarely if ever sought Mr. Klein's advice, the latter came to feel deeply the ignominy of his position.

Before the end of President Nixon's first term, he talked seriously of resigning but, with California looming ever larger as a key to Mr. Nixon's re-election, he was persuaded to remain.

Personally popular among many capital newsmen, he succeeded despite his lack of power or prestige, in breaking down barriers for them on numerous occasions, although he could no longer pretend to be on the "inside" of what was transpiring within the White House.