

New White House Counsel Seen As the Kind of Man Most Needed



PHILLIP E. AREEDA
... analytical knack

Colleagues in Phillip E. Areeda's legal community say the Harvard law professor is just the kind of man most needed in the White House and most conspicuously missing during the honeymoon period that has just ended.

Areeda, newly named to the post of counsel to the President, "can see the implications of various courses of action," said one associate. "He can look down the road a considerable distance."

A fellow faculty member said Areeda "is great for mapping out alternatives. He can follow through the consequences in more detail than you can imagine."

According to this view, it is not just that Areeda has ability and brains that makes the appointment timely, if not overdue. It's the special analytical knack for thinking problems through that might even have protected Mr. Ford from the manner in which he pardoned former President Nixon and the stunning reaction that ensued.

Whether Areeda would have been included in the handful of advisers who worked on the pardon was one of many topics Areeda declined to speculate about yesterday in the executive office, where he is temporarily installed as a part-time consultant. His formal appointment is scheduled for Oct. 14.

Nor would Areeda discuss the correctness of the decision or any other actions taken by his new client since taking over as President.

The discreet silence of the 44-year-old appointee was in stark contrast to the scene in his Harvard classrooms, where Areeda kept up a drumbeat of questions for students of anti-trust and regulatory law.

In that sanctuary, Areeda operated in virtuoso style, engaging students in rapid-fire Socratic dialogue and not hesitating to display annoyance at foolish answers.

Outwardly Areeda is "frosty and dispassionate," one former student recalled yesterday, but few law professors were regarded by the student body as more approachable and more concerned with their problems when classes were over.

His basic job security as a tenured law professor is expected to give Areeda a high sense of independence in the performance of his duties, but if previous tours of duty are a guide, it will not prompt him to "go public" if his advice is not followed.

As executive director of a 1969 White House task force on oil import quotas, Areeda maintained silence over his disagreements and difficulties with oil industry lobbyists and their friends in Congress.

When House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Wilbur Mills (D-Ark.) warned Areeda that he hoped "your group will go very slowly in tinkering with the matter of oil import quotas," Areeda

steered straight ahead to a report that demolished the industry's "national defense" arguments for the import restrictions, said they cost Americans \$8 billion a year and recommended that they be scrapped.

The report won the support of task force Chairman George P. Shultz, but it was quietly shelved by President Nixon. Areeda was not happy, but he returned to full-time teaching without breaking stride and without publicly complaining. He had done his job and the politicians had done theirs.

What would Areeda have done if he had been a part of the late Nixon administration? Again, Areeda would not speculate, but a Harvard law teacher suggested, "He would have gotten out no later than Shultz and probably earlier."

A previous White House hitch was during the Eisenhower years of 1956 and 1957, when Areeda was in the Air Force a few years after graduation from law school. "He has served every Republican President since Hoover," his students frequently say of him.

His rank then was assistant special counsel to the President. Areeda's new rank of presidential counsel makes Philip W. Buchen, President Ford's old friend and trusted adviser, who will hold the same title but Cabinet rank, the senior partner in the counsel's office.

Apparently Mr. Ford's clemency action had no effect on the appointment, since Areeda was first called about the job on Aug. 23.

Areeda's outside interests are travel, opera and sports.

"He's an opera nut," one friend said. "He'll go anywhere to hear a new opera."

He is known at Harvard, where he was a summa cum laude graduate of both the college and law school, as one who became a good tennis player and skier through sheer determination.