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'Government by TV' Charged by Johnson of F.C.C.

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13 — Nicholas Johnson, a member of the Federal Communications Commission, described the Nixon Administration today as a case study in "government by television."

As he outlined it to an international convention of political consultants in London, the new style of government is a threat to constitutional democracy. It is marked, he said, by the force feeding of ideology, the manipulation of news events and the suppression of dissent — all abetted by the intimidation of broadcasters.

Mr. Johnson's speech — 40 pages of text and 10 pages of footnotes — also indicated that virtually no episode in President Nixon's relations with the media goes unnoticed and uncatalogued by Mr. Johnson's staff.

Mr. Johnson's speech, the most detailed expressions of themes he has emphasized many times before, was prepared for delivery tomorrow and released here today.

No Conspiracy Seen

Mr. Johnson's attack cites scores of familiar items—from Vice President Agnew's attack on TV commentators in November, 1969, to the assertedly "nonpolitical" broadcast of a program honoring the Sontay prison camp raiders between halves of the Army-Navy football game two weeks ago—to illustrate his general contention that the television networks have been made more and more responsive to the national Government's wishes.

Government by television, Mr. Johnson said, is not the result of a "conspiracy," nor



Associated Press

Nicholas Johnson

does it involve "a single man or industry." At the same time, he said, it is not entirely accidental. President Nixon, he said, has used television "more, more consciously, and in a more wide-ranging way, than any prior President."

The fact that government by television is not based on a single conspiracy, he suggested, is no reason to be less concerned about its consequences.

"The press bears a special opportunity and responsibility

in this regard," he said. "It must investigate and expose the charades and facades. And it must develop its own traditions, including firm positions on pressure it will not tolerate—such as subpoenas and calls from Directors of Communication. The public must be educated about the uses of, and pressures upon, the media."

Mr. Johnson, 36 years old, was appointed to the seven-member F.C.C. by President Johnson in 1966 and has said that he will serve until his term expires in mid-1973. He is a Democrat.

Many of the Nixon Administration's approaches to the media are unprecedented, Mr. Johnson argued, starting with the appointment of Herbert G. Klein to the new post of Director of Communications—a title, Mr. Johnson said, "which has a strongly authoritarian ring to it" and was "formerly unknown outside Fascist and Communist countries."

Censorship Charged

Until Mr. Agnew's speech in Des Moines last year, Mr. Johnson said, no Administration had combined an attack on broadcasters with such a pointed reminder that television facilities are licensed by the Federal Government. Despite the Ad-

ministration's denial of an intent to censor, he said, the result of Mr. Agnew's speech and other Government actions has been censorship.

Mr. Johnson argued that Dean Burch, the chairman of the commission, had contributed to the same result when he called the three network presidents for transcripts of their commentators' remarks on a Presidential address.

As a result of the calls, Mr. Johnson said, "the broadcasting industry had received the message, whether or not Burch intended it, the F.C.C. was going to be run as a branch office of the White House, and that its powers might very well be used to punish those who failed to provide the propaganda support the Administration desired."

Mr. Johnson also objected to the White House conference with broadcasters and executives of the record industry that contributed to the inclusion of antidrug messages in a number of popular entertainment programs.

"The Administration has made it clear that, at least for certain purposes, it considers private television programming as an arm of the Government's public information efforts," he said.