

Nixon wants more control of airwaves, memo suggests

WASHINGTON — Two years ago, President Nixon set up a special office in the White House to coordinate telecommunications policy. This caused quiet apprehension that the President intended to exercise more personal control over radio-television matters.

Such a thought, a spokesman assured us, was the last thing on the President's mind. We have obtained a fascinating memo, however, which suggests otherwise.

The memo, intended for the eyes only of a few advertising executives, indicates that the President would like to stack the regulatory agencies with people who will go along with his telecommunications policies.

Specifically, he would like to replace Federal Trade Commission Chairman Miles Kirkpatrick, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Dean Burch and Federal Communications Commissioner Nicholas Johnson with appointees more on the White House wave length, according to the memo.

This would increase the President's influence upon the radio-television industry.

The memo was written by Alan Katzenstein, one of the managers of the Needham, Harper and Steers advertising agency in New York City. His memo, summarizing conversations in Washington on July 27, quotes Brian Lamb of the White House telecommunications staff as saying:

FCC shakeup?

"The President and his staff are unhappy with appointees who appear to support and promote measures that would upset the existing free-enterprise and marketing system.

"Lamb twice made the point that great care will be taken in selecting replacements when vacancies occur in the regulatory agencies, implying especially Kirkpatrick, Burch and Nick Johnson."

Lamb characterized Burch as "unpredictable in actions and in the way he will vote," according to the memo. Johnson, on the other hand, "predictably takes the opposing side."

Wiley a favorite

The memo suggests that the newest FCC commissioner, Richard Wiley, might replace Chairman Burch. Wiley is described as "clearly a favorite of the administration and

will be considered for the next opening of the chairmanship."

Katzenstein acknowledged to us that the memo was authentic. Lamb also confirmed that he had talked to Katzenstein on July 27.

Jack Anderson

But both men insisted the memo, while covering the correct subject matter, overstated Lamb's remarks.

"I can't speak for the President," Lamb told us. "I made this clear to Katzenstein."

Katzenstein, after receiving a call from Lamb, also partly repudiated the memo. "I don't think I can stand up in court under oath and say this is what the gentleman said. These were merely my impressions a day later," Katzenstein asserted.

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