

Four network bureau chiefs are to meet this morning (Monday, July 15) with White House deputy press secretary **Larry Speakes** on his directive that White House is to have control over **broadcast feed of presidential speeches**. Speakes' July 5 memo asserting networks' microphones would be barred was White House response to networks' use of President Reagan's off-cuff remark—offered in advance of nationally broadcast speech on release of hostages, and picked up by broadcasters—that he would take cue from "Rambo" next time Americans were taken hostage (BROADCASTING, July 8). Speakes said that ad lib was off record and that networks broke agreement in reporting and broadcasting it. ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN bureau chiefs are known to feel Speakes' plan is unacceptable; that White House communications agency cannot provide broadcast quality feed. New system was employed on Thursday, in connection with taping of presidential remarks that were to be broadcast on Saturday (July 12). Signal provided Mutual, as radio pool, was "not broadcast quality," according to Jim Rutledge, CNN deputy bureau chief. Bureau chiefs last week were said to have number of counter proposals for discussion in meeting with Speakes.

Group of **congressmen** issued statement last week **calling for major television networks to develop voluntary guidelines in reporting hostage situations**. After recent coverage of hostage crisis in Lebanon, group, led by Representative Thomas Luken (D-Ohio), is concerned that future hijackers may think they can get sympathetic exposure on networks. "We must find a way to neutralize television as a tool of terrorism," Luken said. They suggested that networks might prohibit on-air dialogue between anchormen and spokesmen for kidnappers, and network pools to restrict kidnappers access to airwaves. Luken stressed congressmen were not interested in introducing legislation. "We're not in business of censorship," Luken said. Other members calling for action include



From Dandy Don to Broadway Joe. "I can't think of anyone who's going to be more fun than this," began **Roone Arledge** (c), in announcing that **Joe Namath** (l) will replace **Don Meredith** in the booth on Monday Night Football. Namath reportedly signed a five-year deal for \$1 million a year. ABC confirmed the contract length, but only revealed that its terms were "very good," and that the last three years of the deal depended upon ABC's renewal of its contract with the NFL for broadcast rights to the Monday night games. Namath, who greeted a reporter's question on whether he had any experience behind a microphone with a "no" and a smile, will debut on Aug. 3 when ABC broadcasts the Hall of Fame game between the Houston Oilers and the New York Giants. In making the announcement, Arledge said the "NFL has done well by us" when it came to making the 1985-86 schedule. Arledge said that the network has thought of moving the Monday night games to 8 p.m. NYT, "but not this year." Monday Night Football's ratings were down 6% last season.

Namath will join **O.J. Simpson** and **Frank Gifford** (r) in the booth. Both Namath and Simpson will be inducted into the Hall of Fame before the Aug. 3 game. Gifford is already in the hall.

Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), **James Broyhill** (R-N.C.), **Jim Bryant** (D-Tex.), **Thomas Bliley** (R-Va.), **Jim Bates** (D-Calif.), **Carlos Moorhead** (R-Calif.) and **Jim Slattery** (R-Kan.).

Are RCA and MCA talking merger? That was rumor in New York last week. Quoting unnamed sources, *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times* reported last week that two companies have had merger discussions off and on for past year. Journal said talks were currently off, but "might resume." "We are not commenting on that," said RCA spokesman **Howard Enders**. "It's our policy not to comment on any rumor of acquisitions or divestitures." **David Londoner**, analyst with **Wertheim & Co.**, said he was unaware of any talks, but that his firm has been telling clients for long time that MCA may diversify by merging with another company. Merger of corporations would cause at least one regulatory problem. FCC rules forbid broadcast networks from having financial stake in any of programming they buy and from syndicating programming domestically. RCA owns NBC and MCA owns Universal Television, which produces television programs for NBC and others, and MCA TV, which syndicates programs domestically and internationally.

Warner Communications is postponing for second time company's annual meeting, most recently scheduled for Aug. 9. Company cited continuing discussions with 29.5% owner, **Chris-Craft Industries**, over latter's desire for increased representation on 14-member Warner board—it currently has three seats ("Top of the Week," July 8). **Chris-Craft** last week filed with Securities and Exchange Commission saying it had arranged \$175 million in additional credit for funds that might be used to purchase more Warner stock. Total of such credit available to **Chris-Craft** and subsidiary, **United Television**, now stands at \$325 million. SEC filing also said **Chris-Craft** had retained **First Boston Corp.** as adviser concerning investment in Warner and that it recently purchased 117,000 additional shares of Warner. At midday Friday, Warner was trading at 31 3/4.

Raleigh, N.C., ABC affiliate WRAL-TV will become CBS affiliate, effective Aug. 4. Present CBS affiliate **WTVD(TV)** is owned by **Capital Cities Communications**, which is in process of acquiring ABC. **WTVD** was identified as one of stations that would not be spun-off as result of **Capital Cities-ABC** combination. "The proposed merger between **Capital Cities** and **ABC** set up some opportunity in the market," explained **CBS Television Network President Tony Malaro**. "Our decision to do this simply indicates a desire to get with the new partners as soon as possible." **WRAL-TV** is principally owned by **James Goodmon** and his brother, **Ray**. **WRAL-TV** is on channel 5; **WTVD** is on channel 11.

FCC last week rejected complaints by CIA and American Legal Foundation (ALF) alleging fairness and news distortion violations by ABC. At issue in complaints were **ABC World News Tonight** broadcasts last year which, among other things, broadcast statement asserting agency had attempted to arrange killing of Hawaii investment banker. FCC said **CIA** and **ALF** had not presented adequate case on any of those issues. FCC, however, also upheld ruling permitting government agencies to file such complaints against broadcasters. In other action, FCC also rejected news distortion and personal attack complaint **ALF** had filed against **CBS** over July 1983 **Pentagon/Underground**, segment of **CBS's Our Times with Bill Moyers**. FCC ruled **ALF** had not presented evidence supporting claim that **CBS** knowingly distorted information. FCC rejected personal attack complaint, contending only person or group attacked, or authorized agent for that person or group, can file such complaints. FCC also eliminated its requirement that radio licensees file network affiliation and transcription contracts, but retained that requirement for television stations affiliated with national networks.

Organization that represents owners of backyard earth stations says its members will ignore announcements of Turner Broadcasting System and ESPN that they will charge home dish owners who view their programs, which are not yet scrambled (BROADCASTING July