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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESS CONFERENCE OF VICENTE XIMENES  
THE PRESS SECRETARY'S OFFICE

AT 1:07 P.M. EDT

MR. XIMENES: I would like to announce to you that the President has given us the signal to go ahead on a hearing for Mexican-Americans to be held on October 27 and 28 in El Paso, Texas.

On the 28th, the President will also be in El Paso for the signing of the Chamizal Treaty.

However, the main purpose of this hearing that we are going to have in El Paso is to bring together about 1,000 Mexican-Americans who are well versed in approaches to the problems which we have already related so many times.

Now we are at the point where we would like to hear from these people some solutions and perhaps some new directions and perhaps some new ideas.

Q You are going to hear from 1,000?

MR. XIMENES: There will be 1,000 people there. There will be some selected group from that number who will speak or who will have papers, for example, prepared for presentation to the four Cabinet members who compose the Inter-Agency Committee on Mexican-American Affairs.

Q Is that what you are representing?

Mr. XIMENES: Yes.

Q What is the main problem? You talk about problems that they are going to address themselves to.

MR. XIMENES: The likelihood is that we will try to compartmentalize the subjects, let's say, in housing, or in the migrant area, or perhaps in the agricultural area, you see. Then we will try to give individuals who are knowledgeable on this subject an opportunity to present papers on them.

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Q Do you expect to hear from people who have been involved in strikes, for example, some of those in the Texas Valley?

MR. XIMENES: I don't know of any. At this point, I don't know who we can expect to hear from.

Q The Rio Grande Valley workers?

MR. XIMENES: If there is someone, for example, who wants to present a paper on that particular subject, if it has to do with, let's say, wages and hours, very likely Secretary Wirtz would want to hear something along those lines.

Q Will this also involve the hiring or retraining for hiring of Mexican-Americans in industries or is this a major concern of the Committee?

MR. XIMENES: We are certainly very hopeful that we will get some kind of solutions or new ideas along those lines.

Incidentally, we announced the other day a program in which 2500 Mexican-Americans will become involved in an on-the-job training program in California.

Q Sir, is this in lieu of a White House conference?

MR. XIMENES: This conference is rooted in the memorandum President Johnson signed in which he created the Inter-Agency Committee on Mexican-American Affairs. One of the paragraphs in that memorandum says that we shall hear problems and solutions of the Mexican-Americans of this nature.

Q Who will be taking this testimony?

MR. XIMENES: There will be Mr. Shriver, Secretary Wirtz, Secretary Freeman, Secretary Gardner, Secretary Weaver, and myself.

Q Wirtz is chairman?

MR. XIMENES: I am the chairman.

Q Do you expect the President to attend a session?

MR. XIMENES: The President is going to be there with President Diaz Ordaz for the signing of the Chamizal Treaty. Of course, we will invite the President to come over and be with us some part of the time.

Q What part of the day of the 28th is that ceremony?

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MR. XIMENES: I don't know the hour.

Q Will it be on the site or the bridge?

MR. XIMENES: The likelihood is that it will be on the site of the Chamizal. I am just assuming. I don't know the details of the Chamizal ceremony, other than that the President will be there.

Q Are these the first such hearings you have held?

MR. XIMENES: Yes, these will be the first.

Q What is the date of the Executive Order setting up this committee?

MR. XIMENES: That was on June 9 of this year.

Q Where will these hearings be held? What building in El Paso?

MR. XIMENES: They will be in a number of hotels in El Paso. The Hotel Cortez, for example, will be one, I am sure.

Q You mean the hearings will be scattered?

MR. XIMENES: That is correct. They will be simultaneous hearings.

Q Will this be a hearing analagous to a House or investigative hearing?

MR. XIMENES: It will be more analagous to a conference.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

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AT 1:15 P. M. ED\_