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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 1, 1975

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

PHIL BUCHEN

FROM:

JIM CONNOR *JEC*

SUBJECT:

Robert Spindell's offer to Donate Indoor
Driving Range

Your memorandum of October 22 and the entire question of Robert Spindell's offer to donate an Indoor Driving Range were reviewed by the President.

The President requested that you discuss the matter further with Mr. Spindell to explore the possibility of his accepting the gift and where it might be located.

Please follow-up with appropriate action.

cc: Don Rumsfeld

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: DONALD RUMSFELD
FROM: JAMES E. CONNOR *JEC*
SUBJECT: Robert Spindell's offer to Donate Indoor Driving Range

On June 25th, Mr. Robert Spindell wrote to Don Rumsfeld (copy attached at Tab A) mentioning that he had asked you if you would like to have an indoor golf range in one of the rooms in the Executive Office Building. He proposed to make a gift of such a range, to buy the materials and ship them to Washington.

On October 1st, Mr. Spindell wrote again (attached at Tab B) asking about his offer, suggesting his June 25th letter be shown to Phil Buchen.

Mr. Buchen's office was asked for guidance on the matter, and his recommendation is attached at Tab C. As you will note, he recommends against acceptance of this gift.

Your guidance is needed as to how you wish us to proceed:

1. Have Phil Buchen discuss the matter further with Mr. Spindell to explore the possibility of your accepting the gift and where it might be located.

Approve *JEC* Disapprove _____

2. Have Phil Buchen write to Mr. Spindell on your behalf explaining why it would not be appropriate to accept the gift.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

3. Have Phil Buchen draft a letter from you to Mr. Spindell explaining why it would not be appropriate to accept the gift.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Attachments

B

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 6, 1975

Dear Bob:

Thank you so much for your note. You are right. The fundraising affair was excellent! I will contact Phil Buchen this week and see that your request is fulfilled.

Warm regards.

Sincerely,

Donald Rumsfeld
Assistant to the President

Mr. Robert F. Spindell
135 South LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois

ROBERT F. SPINDELL
135 SOUTH LA SALLE STREET
CHICAGO

October 1, 1975

Dear Don:

As you observed first hand, the inauguration of the Illinois Republican Committee was a resounding success. It was a full house and the President was in great fettle. His speech was just right for the occasion and left everyone with the impression that the Presidency is in the best possible hands. He has such a wonderful way of looking at the people with whom he shakes hands that everyone of them immediately becomes his friend. Even staid old Jim Kemper came away with a great big, highly pleased smile!

During my conversation with the President I mentioned again the inside golf range at Camp David and told him I would like to give him one to be installed in an empty office in the Executive Office Building. He asked me if I thought it would improve his golf game and when I assured him it would, he indicated he liked the idea. I told him that I had sent to you a letter setting forth the details which you had forwarded to Phil Buchen and that I would remind him to bring it to the President's attention. He said that would be fine. Accordingly, Don, I would appreciate it very much if you would ask Mr. Buchen to show my letter of June 25th to the President or discuss it with him. All that would be necessary to go ahead would be the designation of someone to meet with me in the Executive Office Building so that we could take the appropriate measurements. It would require about two months to acquire the material and install it.

When Mr. Buchen discusses this matter with the President, please ask him to emphasize the following three points to the President:

1. It would very definitely improve his golf game.
2. Hitting golf balls for 15 or 20 minutes in the late afternoon would stir up his circulation and make him refreshed for the rest of the day and evening.
3. The problems of the day would vanish from his mind for the 15 or 20 minute period, because it is impossible for one to think of anything else while hitting a golf ball. It constitutes a splendid change of pace.

I know the important part you played in arranging Harold Smith's big party last night, and I am delighted that it was so completely successful. It will materially strengthen the Republican Party in Illinois.

I am looking forward to seeing you in person and in action on the 30th at the same place. You are obviously convinced that Illinois will be a vitally important state next year. And you are so right.

Sincerely,



Mr. Donald Rumsfeld
Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

P.S. I thought you might like to have me enclose a copy of my letter to you of June 25th.

June 25, 1975

Dear Don:

When visiting with the President last evening at the RN Associates reception in the White House, I asked him if he would like to have an indoor golf range in one of the rooms in the Executive Office Building. (We had just talked about the golf range at Camp David). Since the idea is new and the execution of it a little complex, I told him I would write to you about the details and ask you to bring them to his attention. Hence this letter.

I told the President that Mr. Nixon and I had played golf together a good deal and that I had proposed setting up a golf range in the Executive Office Building. Mr. Nixon asked Bud Wilkinson to work with me on this and we found an empty office that we thought would provide the idea inside golf range. The ceiling was so high that it would permit the use of a 7 iron, which is almost unheard of in an inside range. Nets would be hung about 18" from each of the side walls and from the ceiling. Two canvases would be hung at the front edge about a foot apart. A rubber mat with a 30" x 12" astro turf insert, would constitute the last ingredient. A frame would hold a mirror and the golf sticks. As Johnny Miller has repeatedly said, it is impossible for one to improve one's golf swing unless he can see it, either in a mirror, movies or video-tape. I have a golf range in my basement and one in the back yard and I find the mirror is invaluable. Two last items are adequate lighting from the ceiling and a ball "picker-upper."

I would be more than delighted to make a gift of such a range to the President, and I would buy the materials and ship them to Washington, as I did for the Camp David range, and then give instructions as to how they are to be erected.

I am not familiar with whether there is space in the White House for a golf range, but it must have a ceiling clearance of 7½ to 8' and I doubt that the ceiling of the ground floor space is that high. My basement range is only 18' long, 9' wide and 7½' high.

The President said that there was a move afoot to re-establish the putting green and put in a sand trap. If he added the golf range to these two items he would soon have his golf scores in the lower 80's and occasionally the higher 70's. If this became known to the public, they would think that he was neglecting his job! I must emphasize in passing that hitting balls hard for twenty minutes can do more to stir up one's circulation and at the same time take one's mind off everything else than any other physical activity. One simply cannot hit a golf ball and think of anything else!

I am sure that everyone who listened to the President's short but stimulating speech, and visited with him afterwards felt the same as Ethel and I: First, he looked definitely younger than the photographs and television indicated; he looked to be in excellent, robust good health; he has stunningly handsome blue eyes which both women and men like; he has a truly infectious smile; he is disarmingly forthright and everyone that meets him instinctively likes him and feels that our Federal Government is in very good hands indeed. He has that rare combination of being your leader, but at the same time your friend. This was a very critical audience and everyone with whom I talked felt that we had just the right man to lead us, both now and in the four years commencing in November 1976.

As I read the Washington Post this morning I could not help but chuckle at Mr. Meany's complaint about the lack of a veto-proof Congress!

How are you holding up under your 12 to 14 hour days?!

With warmest personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

Mr. Donald Rumsfeld
Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

C

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 22, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JIM CONNOR
FROM: PHIL BUCHEN 
SUBJECT: Indoor Golf Range

This is in response to your request for guidance on Mr. Robert Spindell's offer to donate an indoor driving range to the President for installation in the EOB. From a strictly legal standpoint, there is authority to accept this by several alternative methods as an unconditional gift to the United States, as long as there is no specific requirement of where or how it is to be used, and the annual maintenance does not impose a legal "burden upon the United States for its upkeep."

Although no firm policy has been established for the acceptance of domestic gifts, we have generally sought to avoid the acceptance of valuable gifts such as this or the putting green. Without meaning to bring into question Mr. Spindell's motives, I point out that such gifts have been the subject of considerable media attention over the last several years. Clearly no acceptance should be made unless we also know about Mr. Spindell's occupation and business interests. In addition, this is a time when we should avoid emphasizing such high visibility gifts that appear to take away from the time the President devotes to his official duties. It is my understanding that these were also the main reasons for turning down the putting green last spring.

For the above reasons, we recommend against acceptance of this gift.