

Reporter Confronts

Ziegler

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White House Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler and Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Clark R. Mollenhoff engaged in a tense confrontation yesterday over the accuracy of a quote Mollenhoff attributed to Ziegler last week.

"I'm challenging you on a specific point of accuracy," said Mollenhoff, a former White House adviser who heads the Washington bureau of The Des Moines Register.

But as Mollenhoff repeatedly pressed his challenge, Ziegler replied blandly each time, "I've issued a statement and I stand by it."

Mollenhoff, in a dispatch last week, quoted Ziegler as admitting that funds to finance the alleged bugging of Democratic National Committee Headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington had come from the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

"There is no question but that the money came from the committee," Mollenhoff quoted Ziegler as saying.

Ziegler subsequently issued an angry denial in which he said the story was "a misinterpretation of what I said and placed totally out of context."

"I have no personal knowl-

edge of any aspect of this matter other than what I read in the press, therefore I am not in a position to make any statement whatever on the subject," Ziegler said in his statement last week.

It was that statement that Ziegler refused to elaborate on in his impromptu debate with Mollenhoff yesterday during the press secretary's regular mid-day news conference.

Mollenhoff opened by telling Ziegler, "I want a confrontation out here where we have questioned."

witnesses. My story has been

After Ziegler replied that he had issued a statement, Mollenhoff attempted to reconstruct his earlier private conversation with the press secretary.

"We had just gone over the \$1,600 that Liddy had in his possession," said Mollenhoff. "We had just gone over the \$3,500 that Hunt spent for electronic devices. At that question but that the money came from the committee."

point you said there was no G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt, both former White House employees, have been indicted in the Watergate bugging incident.

Earlier in the briefing, Ziegler announced that President Nixon would make a radio broadcast Sunday afternoon on the subject of crime.

In a parting shot, Mollenhoff asked Ziegler, "The speech Sunday on crime—will that include the Watergate?"

"You'll have a text Sunday," Ziegler replied.