

WHITE HOUSE BARS REPLY TO CHARGES

Ziegler Says There Will Be
No Comment This Week—

Nixon Kept Informed

6/26/73
By JOHN HERBERS

Special to The New York Times

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., June 25—The White House said today President Nixon would have no comment this week on charges by John W. Dean 3d that the President was involved in the cover-up of the Watergate case.

"We are not going to have any comment on the Ervin committee hearings as the week proceeds," said Ronald L. Ziegler, the President's press secretary.

Questioned about the spe- Mr. Ziegler said the White House staff had not had an opportunity to examine the testimony, but beyond that "as the week progresses we do not feel that the appropriate thing is to comment."

Mr. Ziegler's remark, at the end of a briefing chiefly on the Soviet-American joint communiqué, came at midday, before Mr. Dean was halfway through his long statement. He had at that time, however, implicated the President in the cover-up activities.

Nixon Told of Testimony

Mr. Ziegler said the President was not watching the proceedings on television, at least from his office. He went to his office in the Government compound from his home only a few hundred yards away, about two and a half hours after the Watergate hearings began in Washington. It was 7 A.M. here when the proceedings opened.

Mr. Ziegler said that the President was being advised throughout the day on the essence of the testimony. He was following the procedure established earlier, Mr. Ziegler said, in which staff members watched the proceedings on television and recorded and prepared summaries. These were then given to the President by Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., his chief of

staff.

Mr. Ziegler would not even comment on the references that Mr. Dean made about him. At one point, Mr. Dean said that the White House press office had informed White House officials that Time magazine was going to print an article, which it ultimately did, stating that the White House had ordered the tapping of reporters' telephones. An investigation was conducted, according to Mr. Dean, in which it was determined that the article was true, but then Mr. Ziegler was told to say the article was not true.

"Could you tell us at the time that you told us the story was not true, whether you actually knew that it was?" Mr. Ziegler was asked.

He said that although he had a desire to respond to such a question because it involved himself, he had to apply the "same ground rules" laid down by the White House to himself as he did to testimony involving others.

Past Explanation Cited

Mr. Ziegler said the press office had already said that its series of untrue statements on the Watergate had rested on what Mr. Ziegler and others had been told to say by officials involved.

Neither would Mr. Ziegler comment on reports that a group of White House officials were preparing a campaign to rebut the Dean charges, not through official statements but through rebuttal witnesses and other means in the official investigations.

Henry A. Kissinger, the President's chief assistant on foreign policy, was asked during a long briefing on the summit meetings whether the release of the joint communiqué, which was signed yesterday, had been delayed 24 hours to take attention from the Dean testimony.

Mr. Kissinger denied that it had, saying the entire schedule for the summit meetings and release of the document had been set up when it was believed that Mr. Dean would be testifying last week. His testimony was delayed at the request of Senate leaders, who said they wanted nothing to distract from building better Soviet-American relations.