

Ford Would Not Retain Ziegler

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Gerald R. Ford's office confirms he indicated Ronald L. Ziegler would not be retained as White House press secretary if Ford became President, and that he has reservations about Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger.

But Press aide Paul Miltich said Ford was not talking in terms of directly firing either Ziegler or Schlesinger when he answered questions on possible appointees if he became President for an article in the current New Republic magazine.

Miltich said he is less upset with the article than with Columnist William Safire's criticism that it is unseemly for Ford "to be confiding his plans for the assumption of power while the body of the setting

president is still warm."

Safire's column, Miltich said, "makes it sound like Ford is waiting in the wings frothing at the mouth wanting to be President. This is just not an accurate characterization."

The press secretary pointed out that the New Republic article by John Osborne starts by saying Ford emphasizes both publicly and privately that he expects President Nixon to complete his term.

Ford did tell Osborne, Miltich confirmed, that he felt Defense Secretary Schlesinger did not know how to deal well with Congress.

"But what secretary of defense has been particularly adept at dealing with Congress, except maybe Mel Laird?" Miltich added.

At the Pentagon, a spokesman said Schlesinger would have no comment.

During a question and answer session with the National Press Club Thursday, Schlesinger said he had had "a good working relationship with Gerald Ford, but I am not expecting any changes to occur and in the future I am prepared to serve ... so long as I am needed."

At the same time, Schlesinger said, "I expect to continue to serve this President," referring to President Nixon.

Osborne's article says Ford blames Schlesinger partly for House rejection last week of increased U.S. military aid for South Vietnam.