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Ziegler Says Leaks Distort March 21 Talk

United Press International

Ronald L. Ziegler, President Nixon's press secretary, yesterday criticized news leaks which he said distorted the President's characterization of the events of March 21, 1973.

According to members of the House Judiciary Committee Wednesday, Mr. Nixon said at the beginning of a 15-minute dictabelt recording of the March 21 events that "it was an uneventful day."

Ziegler said that the complete Nixon quotation was as follows: "As far as the day was concerned, it was uneventful except for the talk with Dean."

Mr. Nixon was referring to his conversation with former White House counsel John W. Dean III who told Mr. Nixon of the cover-up in March, 1973, and later implicated the President in testimony before the Senate Watergate committee. Mr. Nixon said March 21, 1973, was the day he first learned of the Watergate cover-up.

Ziegler cited the incomplete quotation emanating from the committee's closed session as "an example of the distortion and piecemeal presentation of this material in stories that ran across the country . . . leaving all the negative connotations."