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Reporter Disputes Ziegler

WASHINGTON — (AP) — A journalist who served on the White House staff challenged presidential press secretary Ronald Ziegler today in a dispute over one aspect of the Watergate controversy, but Ziegler turned aside his barrage of questions.

The dispute centers on a story Clark R. Mollenhoff wrote last week for the Des Moines Register in which he quoted Ziegler as saying, in reference to the financing of the alleged bugging of Democratic headquarters, "There is no question but that the money came from the committee," referring to President Nixon's re-election committee.

Ziegler later issued a statement saying that the quote was "a misinterpreta-

tion of what I said" to Mollenhoff, who quit in 1970 as Nixon's special counsel assigned to investigate wrongdoing in the executive branch.

At today's White House briefing, Mollenhoff took a seat 10 feet away from Ziegler and asked whether he was denying the specific quote which Mollenhoff used in his article.

"I've issued a statement on that," Ziegler said.

"My story has been questioned," Mollenhoff said. "I want a confrontation out here where we have witnesses."

"I have issued a statement on that," Ziegler repeated.

"I don't want you to get away that way," Mollenhoff said as he persisted with

other questions which Ziegler greeted with "I've issued a statement and stand by it."

After Mollenhoff said, "That's the kind of crap we've been getting out of the White House all along," Ziegler looked away and asked, "Any other questions?"

The briefing shifted to other subjects, but Mollenhoff raised more questions on the Watergate case later and told Ziegler he would "be here every day to ask these questions again."

Earlier in the briefing Ziegler announced 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?"