

Private Phone Plugs White House News Leak

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House says it was "pretty much" able to plug news leaks involving national security affairs in 1971 after installing a private telephone to help in the investigation.

Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler said Tuesday the telephone was used by two presidential aides, Egil Krogh and David Young. He declined to say where it was located or who authorized its use.

The Washington Post reported earlier that a special private telephone in the Executive Office Building was billed to the home of a secretary, and "was used almost exclusively" by E. Howard Hunt Jr. and Bernard L. Barker.

Hunt and Barker are two of the defendants in the Watergate case involving a break-in and alleged bugging of Democratic national headquarters here in June.

But Ziegler discounted any connection between the telephone and the Watergate case. He said it was removed in January of this year and it was "folly to associate it" with events that occurred later in the year.

Ziegler would not specify the leaks that were under investigation by Krogh and Young, but asked if they were able to plug them, he said: "Pretty much so."

He said the private telephone was necessary so that sources reporting to Krogh and Young "could do so on a private basis."