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Why John Connally Is Quitting

Washington

An associate of former Treasury secretary John B. Connally Jr. yesterday blamed friction with the White House staff, particularly press secretary Ronald Ziegler, for cutting short Connally's tenure as special adviser to President Nixon.

The associate, who asked not to be identified, confirmed reports that Connally soon would leave the post he took only five weeks ago.

As a result of his troubles in the advisory job, the associate acknowledged, the former Texas governor's drive for a place on the 1976 Republican presidential ticket has been stalled.

At a White House dinner for Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev last night, Connally told newsmen he would explain his position at a news conference later this week.

According to the associate, Connally's advice to Watergate disclosures this spring included a recommendation for Ziegler's ouster.

The associate said Connally then told Ziegler at a face-to-face meeting he should resign.

Connally's reasons, the associate said, were his belief that Ziegler's usefulness as press secretary was limited because of Ziegler's role as spokesman during the Watergate coverup and his fear that Ziegler might ultimately be tainted personally by the Watergate matter.

Instead of seeking Ziegler's resignation, however, Mr. Nixon expanded his authority, naming him special assistant as well as press secretary.

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