

OCT 26 1972

White House Defends Top Nixon Aide

SFChronicle
United Press

Washington

The White House denied yesterday that President Nixon's chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, ever had access to a secret fund to finance political spying and sabotage or even that such a fund ever existed.

Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler, in issuing the denials, broke a self-imposed rule under which he said he would not comment directly on charges of espionage and sabotage because he would not "dignify" them.

Ziegler also launched a counter-attack on the

See Back Page

From Page 1

Washington Post, which reported yesterday that still-secret testimony before a federal grand jury had identified Haldeman as one of five close associates of the President authorized to approve payments from a secret campaign fund.

ABUSE

Ziegler described the story as "a vicious abuse of the entire journalistic process by the Washington Post. It is political and it is an effort to discredit individuals . . . a blatant example of character assassination."

The Post said the fund was used for activities such as the "bugging" of the Democratic National Headquarters in Washington's Watergate complex and the activities of Donald H. Segretti, identified in previous reports as being hired to disrupt Democratic campaigns.

"I am told that there is no such secret fund," Ziegler said. He later amended his statement to say there never had been such a fund.

COUNSEL

Ziegler at first refused to disclose who had told him

there was no fund but in answer to repeated questions from newsmen he identified the source of his information as John Dean III, the White House counsel who conducted an investigation of the Watergate incident at the President's direction.

Ziegler also flatly denied that Haldeman "had access to funds as reported in the Post." He added that Haldeman had not been questioned by the FBI concerning the sabotage and espionage charges.

Clark MacGregor, chairman of the Committee to Re-Elect the President, joined Ziegler in denying the existence of a secret sabotage fund and any Haldeman connection with the alleged spy and disrupt tactics. He also joined in the denunciation of the Post.

DENIED

MacGregor said Haldeman personally denied the Post story to him on the telephone and he also quoted Maurice Stans as saying: "At no time did Bob Haldeman disperse or direct dispersal of funds contributed for Nixon's re-election."

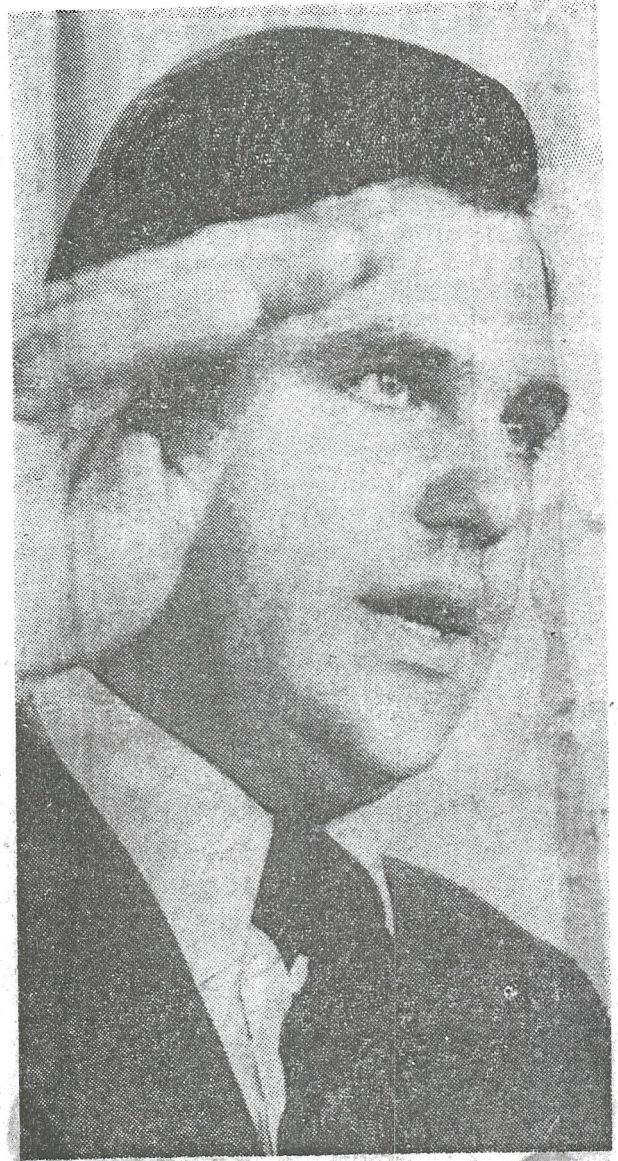
As McGovern went on national television to pursue his charges of corruption in Nixon's administration, Senator Robert Dole, the Kansas who is Republican National Chairman, issued a nine-page statement questioning McGovern's own "credibility as a moralist."

The General Accounting Office, an investigative arm of Congress, reported August 26 that a fund of \$350,000 was found in a safe in the office of Stans, former commerce secretary who is Mr. Nixon's chief campaign fund raiser. The GAO report said the cash fund appeared to violate the new campaign finance law.

Although Ziegler denied all elements of the Post story linking Haldeman with a secret fund account, he declined to go beyond his earlier refusal to comment directly on reports last week that Segretti, a young California attorney, was recruited by the White House to sabotage Democratic campaigns and reported directly to Dwight Chapin, Mr. Nixon's appointments secretary.

OCT 26 1972

Ziegler's Reply



UPI Telephoto

PRESS SECRETARY RONALD ZIEGLER
He broke his silence on sabotage charges