

Ziegler Charges Prosecutor Staff 'Dislikes' Nixon



AP Wirephoto

**JUDGE SULLIVAN
Now White House aide**

Washington

The White House bitterly attacked the staff of the Watergate special prosecutor yesterday, charging that it has displayed an "in-grained suspicion and visceral dislike for this President and this administration."

Press secretary Ronald Ziegler, who has emerged in recent weeks as one of President Nixon's closest advisers, described prosecutor Leon Jaworski as "a very respected man, a very fair man." But he added:

"I have very serious questions about the staff of the special prosecutor's office, though, in political terms."

Ziegler, briefing the press because of the illness of his deputy, Gerald L. Warren, also appeared to indicate a decline in the status of J. Fred Buzhardt Jr., the special White House counsel who has been handling the Watergate case.

Asked whether the President was dissatisfied with Buzhardt's work, Ziegler replied obliquely, remarking that he did not want to express "dissatisfaction with the performance of any individual."

At another point, he said that he did not want to leave the impression that he was "cutting his (Buzhardt's) legs off."

But Ziegler said the White House legal staff has been carrying a very heavy work load that led "to some mistakes." He mentioned as an example the staff's failure to discover until November 14 exactly which Watergate tapes had been subpoenaed months earlier.

Asked specifically whether Buzhardt would remain in charge of the Watergate case, Ziegler would say only that the lawyer would "continue to work on it, continue to play a key role." Buz-

hardt would want to delegate some of the responsibility, the press secretary suggested.

Buzhardt told newsmen later that "I have no plans to resign" and, in response to other questions, said that as far as he knows he still is White House counsel in charge of Watergate legal matters.

However, Ziegler's veiled remarks appeared to add up to a demotion for Buzhardt. And other White House sources said control of the case is expected to pass in the next few days to Judge John J. Sullivan of the Illinois appellate court, a 59-year-old Democrat who has known Mr. Nixon since his Navy days. Sullivan is already working at the Executive Office Building.

Sullivan was identified by Ziegler as one of the members of an informal working group that is assembling a series of statements on such questions as acquisition of

Mr. Nixon's homes, the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. case, the President's taxes and other controversies. The packets of data are to be distributed, beginning next week, to members of Congress, to the press and to other opinion leaders, Ziegler said.

Ziegler's remarks about the prosecutorial staff followed complaints earlier this week from Warren about alleged leaks from that staff, and reflected continuing White House bitterness about the liberal Democratic politics of the team originally assembled by Archibald Cox, who was dismissed as Watergate prosecutor.

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