

Presidential Aides To Report on Press

The White House is now requiring presidential aides who talk to members of the press to report on the conversations to Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler.

Deputy Press Secretary Gerald L. Warren, when asked about the new practice, said that President Nixon's senior aides agreed on it about 10 days ago.

Defending the decision, Warren said he did not know who first suggested it and did not know whether Mr. Nixon knew of it.

The procedure was instituted, Warren said, because the senior staff believed that Ziegler should know about "concerns of the press."

When reporters asked a number of critical questions, Warren argued that "it's not a big deal" and was merely "a matter of exchanging information."

Reporters told Warren that they were not expressing "concerns" when they talked to staff aides but were seeking information about public matters.

When a reporter suggested that the practice would have a

"chilling effect" on staff members in their meetings with reporters, Warren said he did not think so.

News men have long argued against such practices in government because they believe it inhibits officials and does have a "chilling effect" on them.

If the press office knows the names of every reporter who talks to officials, it can easily trace leaks and determine what subordinate officials might be saying.

The practice has been used to some extent in the government in the past, particularly in the Defense Department's office of international security affairs. Some Defense officials insist that a member of the public information office be present at all interviews, and other restrictions are imposed from time to time.