

Ziegler Would Go If Ford Gets In

Washington

Vice President Gerald R. Ford's office confirms he indicated Ronald L. Ziegler would not be retained as White House press secretary if Ford became President, and that he has reservations about Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger.

But press aide Paul Miltich said Ford was not talking in terms of directly firing either Ziegler or Schlesinger when he answered questions on possible appointees if he became President in the current New Republican magazine.

Miltich said he is less upset with the article than with columnist William Safire's criticism that it is unseemly for Ford "to be confiding his plans for the assumption of power while the body of the sitting president is still warm."

Safire's column, Miltich said, "makes it sound like Ford is waiting in the wings frothing at the mouth wanting to be President. This is just not an accurate characterization."

The press secretary pointed out that the New Republic article by John Osborne starts by saying Ford emphasizes both publicly and privately that he expects President Nixon to complete his term.

Ford did tell Osborne, Miltich confirmed, that he felt Defense Secretary Schlesinger did not know how to deal well with Congress.

Osborne's article says Ford blames Schlesinger partly for House rejection last week of increased U.S. military aid for South Vietnam and says whether Schlesinger would be in Ford's Cabinet is "the big question mark."

Ford indicated Ziegler would not be his press secretary simply because Ford would routinely name his own press secretary, Miltich said.

Safire's column in the New York Times quoted Ford as denying the statement in the New Republic story that Ford gets so restive with President Nixon's small talk that Ford has taken to breaking off conversations with Nixon.

Miltich said Ford meant to say that when he talks to the President he doesn't want to "overstay his welcome."

Osborne's article repeats Ford's testimony at his House confirmation hearing that as President he would urge Dr. Henry A. Kissinger to remain secretary of state.

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