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Ziegler Charges

Distortion in Leak Of a Nixon Quote

NYTimes

WASHINGTON, May 23 (UPI) — Ronald L. Ziegler, President Nixon's press secretary, criticized today news leaks that he said distorted the President's characterization of the events of March 21, 1973.

According to members of the House Judiciary Committee yesterday, Mr. Nixon said at the beginning of a 15-minute Dictabelt recording that March 21 had been "an uneventful day."

Mr. Ziegler said that the complete Nixon quotation was as follows: "As far as the day was concerned, it was uneventful except for the talk with Dean."

Mr. Nixon was referring to a conversation with John W. Dean 3d, then his counsel, who told him of the Watergate coverup. The President later said that was the day he first learned about it.

Mr. Ziegler cited the incomplete quotation as "an example of the distortion and piecemeal presentation of this material in stories that ran across the country . . . leaving all the negative connotations.

"The fact is, whoever provided this information not only distorted it, but cut the sentence in half as it is heard on the Dictabelt."

Mr. Ziegler said that was why the White House was demanding that the Judiciary Committee hearings be open or that the full record of the

Watergate proceedings be made public.

"The leaks continue in violation of the committee rules," he said. "A distorted presentation of the evidence continues and yet it appears that Chairman Rodino will not open the House Judiciary Committee proceeding to permit the American people to get an undistorted picture of the evidence."

"If the committee is not going to open up its hearings, it has a responsibility to release the full record of their closed proceeding on Watergate."