

White House Hits Evidence Release

By Carroll Kilpatrick
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The White House yesterday maintained its counter-attack against congressional committees investigating President Nixon's Watergate role.

Press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler assailed the House Judiciary Committee and the Senate Watergate Committee for releasing what he called "piecemeal" reports.

Ziegler attacked the Senate committee for publishing a staff report charging irregular use of campaign funds and the Judiciary Committee for releasing parts of its impeachment hearing.

The committees are carrying out a "calculated public relations exercise to manipulate public opinion through piecemeal leaks in support of impeachment," the press secretary said.

James D. St. Clair, the President's Watergate counsel, nevertheless said he was "pleased" that the Judiciary Committee released "such a large volume of material." He said that the public could not get the "broader scope, the broader picture."

Ziegler said there was no discrepancy between his statement and St. Clair's. He said he was pleased that the Judiciary Committee at last is making parts of its investigation public but "I still feel strongly that the committee after holding secret hearings should release all the material at one time."

Ziegler said the White House believed that a majority of the Judiciary Committee wanted to do a fair job. But he said some of its members and staff were seeking to influence the public against Mr. Nixon.

The press secretary singled out for criticism Reps. Jerome Waldie (D-Calif.), John Conyers (D-Mich.), Robert Drinan (D-Mass.) and Jack Brooks (D-Tex.).

In a meeting with Vice President Ford and House Minority Leader John J. Rhodes (R-Ariz.) and Minority Whip Leslie C. Arends (R-Ill.) yesterday morning to talk about the legislative outlook, the impeachment issue also was discussed, according to those present.

Warren said that the matter was touched on "only in a general way" in terms of procedure and how it would affect the legislative schedule.

An aide to Rhodes said the impeachment procedures were discussed for only about five minutes at the end of a 90-minute breakfast meeting.

Mr. Nixon has had a busy week concentrating particu-

larly on economic matters in preparation for departure today for a two-week stay in San Clemente, Calif.

Ziegler, who met the entire White House press corps for more than an hour Wednesday to defend the President, summoned reporters from the Associated Press and United Press International to his office for yesterday's response to the latest releases.

"I say whoever made this decision (to release part of the material) has made it to condition the public and to create a negative inference towards the President," Ziegler said. "We do not accept it and do not believe it is due process."

Commenting on the Senate committee charge of the misuse of campaign funds by Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo, the President's close friend, Ziegler said Mr. Nixon had never asked Rebozo to raise or maintain campaign funds as charged in the staff report.

However, deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren, when asked about the report, refused specifically to deny the allegations. He said "we don't find any substantiation of the many allegations that are made."

He cited testimony by Rebozo that the funds were not misused and said the White House was in the position of trying to prove a negative. "The burden of proof for the allegations is on those in the committee," Warren said.