

Ret
9-13-71

Agnew to Serve as Liaison Between Nixon, Governors

By Richard M. Cohen
and David S. Broder

Washington Post Staff Writers

SAN JUAN, Sept. 12 — Vice President Agnew today volunteered to become the personal liaison man between the White House and the nation's governors, in a move that some governors interpreted as an effort to enhance his standing with the President and his prospects for renomination to a second term.

Agnew coupled the offer with an invitation from President Nixon for the Executive Committee of the National Governors' Conference to meet with him at the White House Thursday to discuss Phase II of his New Economic Policy.

The Executive Committee accepted both the offer and the invitation, thus giving the administration an opening-round victory in the political maneuvering surrounding the 63d annual meeting of the state executives, which opens formally Monday.

The main event of the day was a peaceful protest march by an estimated 35,000 advo-



VICE PRESIDENT AGNEW
... White House access

cate of Puerto Rican independence, who paraded past the seaside resort hotels where the governors and their parties are staying. Heavy security guards remained in place but there were no incidents of violence.

Agnew, who will address the formal opening session, met

privately this morning with the Executive Committee, and, according to some participants, indicated to the governors he wanted the liaison job as a way of improving his access to the White House.

The action was formally presented as a request of the Executive Committee to the Vice President, and conference chairman Warren E. Hearnes, a Missouri Democrat, insisted to newsmen that the governors had prevailed upon Mr. Agnew to take on the job.

Gov. William Cahill of New Jersey, a Republican member of the Executive Committee, said the governors felt "we are better off with a single person who will represent us at the White House, and if it helps the Vice President with Mr. Nixon, what's the harm in that?"

Agnew told the Executive Committee that he was willing to devote as much time as he could spare to handle their problems.

See GOVERNORS, A16, Col. 1

Agnew to Serve as Liaison Between Nixon, Governors

GOVERNORS, From A1

He added, however, that he did not expect the governors to take their problems directly to the White House, as some have been doing.

According to several sources who attended the meeting, Agnew suggested that the governors make it appear that the offer came from them and not from him. When one governor phrased the resolution to make it sound like it was Agnew's idea, he reportedly said, "No, it's got to come from you."

Another source said that Agnew told the governors his designation would improve

his access to the white House and might result in increasing his personal staff.

Agnew was designated by President Nixon in the early days of the administration as his liaison with the governors. An Office of Inter-Governmental Relations was established under Agnew with former South Dakota Gov. Nils Boe in charge. Boe has since been appointed to the federal bench and there have been complaints from the governors that Agnew was not doing his job.

The griping reached a peak at the last meeting of the Executive Committee in Lake Tahoe, Nev., when governors complained they had been cut

out of the administration of the emergency employment act funds. They asked one of their members, Virginia Gov. Linwood Holton, to take the matter up with the President. Holton arranged through a Nixon aide for the governors to see Mr. Nixon, but when Agnew got wind of the meeting, sources said, he managed to have it canceled and the whole liaison question put over to here.

While there was some disagreement among those attending this morning's meeting as to whether Agnew indicated he was eager or just willing to take on the liaison job, all agreed that he suggested it would strengthen his role with the President.

The Vice President was endorsed for renomination in 1972 by Holton and California Gov. Ronald Reagan, two Republicans among a group of six governors interviewed on "Met the Press" here today. Reagan said it would be "a matter of concern" to him and other conservatives if Agnew were replaced on the 1972 ticket by Secretary of the Treasury John B. Connally, who is still a registered Democrat.

Politics was also kept in low key, as the governors and their families enjoyed the sunny weather and prepared for an evening dinner and concert at the home of Puerto Rico Gov. Luis A. Ferre.

Alabama Gov. George Wallace drew the only big press conference crowd and used the occasion to repeat his threat to run in next year's Democratic presidential primaries in Florida, North Carolina and Tennessee, in addition to or instead of pursuing another third-party try for the presidency. Wallace, obviously enjoying the suspense, said he would not decide his course until the first of the year.

Hearnes, another member of the television panel, sounded a warning to his own party, saying some of the persons considered Democratic presidential candidates were too liberal for his and other states. He singled out New York Mayor John V. Lindsay

as the type who could not often carry Missouri.

Mr. Nixon's invitation to the governors' Executive Committee for a Thursday meeting on the economy deflated a Democratic move to demand greater participation in formulation of Phase II plans. A resolution to that effect was tabled temporarily when the Democrats caucused in Miami Beach on Saturday and now appears to have been rendered moot.

Holton, who defended the President's economic program on "Meet the Press," minimized his differences with Mr. Nixon on the busing of school children to achieve racial integration, but went on to say that he had "seen it work."

He said that as a governor he is closer to the situation and knows that busing can achieve integration. He said, "I think the people at the White House and the President don't see that it is working."

Gov. William G. Milliken of Michigan, whose home state has experienced anti-busing demonstrations in Pontiac, said that he agreed with Holton.

The Republican governor said that "the ultimate objective is to integrate society" and that busing was

a necessary tool. But Wallace, a strong busing foe, insisted that most governors shared his view.

Today's demonstration, called to take advantage of the presence here of the national news media, injected a note of drama into the first day of the conference. Governors were whisked from the airport to their hotels under heavy guard. Reporters who arrived last night were shuttled to the conference site in a bus preceded by a police escort.

Maryland Gov. Marvin Mandel, whose security force was partially trained by the Secret Service when Agnew was Maryland governor and vice president-elect, was moved to a room below Agnew's so his bodyguards could augment the Vice President's.

Security personnel were stationed on each floor of the two hotels where the governors are staying and police—some armed with rifles and shotguns—patrolled the grounds.

The date of the conference opening is auspicious for Puerto Rican "independentistas." It happens to mark the 80th anniversary of the birth of the late nationalist leader, Pedro Albizu Campos