

Aide Denies Paper's Policy Barred It From Agnew Trip

By John Hanrahan

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The Baltimore Sun said yesterday that Vice President Spiro T. Agnew excluded that newspaper from sending a reporter with him on his Asian trip later this month partly because of the newspaper's editorial policy.

The Vice President's office replied that The Sun's editorial policy was not a factor.

The Washington Post also was denied one of the 10 press seats on the plane that will carry Agnew on a 22-day trip that includes a visit to Vietnam.

Responding to The Sun's story, Herbert L. Thompson, Agnew's press secretary, said:

"Certainly this decision had nothing to do with the editorial policy of The Sun. The Washington Post was not excluded for editorial policy reasons, either. This whole business of selecting the newsmen to accompany the Vice President has been one big headache. It's very difficult to try to distinguish between papers."

No Policy Discussion

In choosing from among 32 newspaper, magazine and broadcast media applications for seats on the plane, Thomp-

son said that the matter of editorial policy or views regarding Agnew and the Nixon Administration was "never discussed" by the Vice President.

"The presence of The New York Times" on the trip shows that Agnew was not trying to select only those newspapers that have treated him favorably, Thompson said.

Also to accompany Agnew are representatives of The Los Angeles Times, the Chicago Tribune, Hearst newspapers, The Associated Press, U.S. News and World Report, the American Broadcasting Company, the National Broadcasting Company, the Columbia Broadcasting System and the Washington correspondent for a group of Southern newspapers, including the Nashville Banner, the Jackson (Miss.) Daily News and the Greenville (S.C.) News. No Washington newspaper will be represented.

"Personal Choice"

Frank van der Linden, correspondent for the Southern papers, was "a personal choice" of Agnew's to make the trip, Thompson said.

Also "personally invited" to accompany the Vice President was William Randolph Hearst Jr., chairman and director of

the Hearst Corporation. Hearst declined the invitation and assigned another newsmen to make the trip, Thompson said.

In each case, Thompson said, the newspaper, magazine or network is to pay its own way at a rate slightly higher than commercial airlines' rates. Had Hearst decided to go, he too, would have had to pay his own way, Thompson added.

In addition to The Washington Post and The Baltimore Sun, other applications rejected were from The Christian Science Monitor, Time Magazine, the Cleveland Plain-Dealer and Ridder Newspapers, Thompson said.

Many other large news operations did not apply—including Newsweek, United Press International, The Washington Daily News and other Scripps Howard newspapers, Knight newspapers, The St. Louis Post-Dispatch and the Baltimore News-American, a Hearst newspaper, he added.

Geographic Factor

Thompson said The Washington Post had been rejected because of Agnew's effort to get geographical representation, as well as to include representatives of as many

newspaper chains and wire services as possible to insure maximum coverage nationwide.

Since The Washington Post operates a joint wire service with the Los Angeles Times, the Times' representative will "take care of The Post, he said. To have chosen The Post, Thompson said, would have meant that two eastern papers would have been represented and none from the West Coast.

After Washington Post editors protested that The Post and The Times cover news independently, and that The Post's deadlines are three hours ahead of the West Coast paper's time cycle anyway, Thompson said he had talked with Times bureau people who said they would "take the matter up with top management" to see if they could accommodate The Post's deadlines.

Sun's Account

In its story yesterday, The Sun quoted Thompson as saying: "To be quite honest, he (Agnew) doesn't like the Sun."

"He feels he's been banged around quite a bit, especially since April 11."

This was an apparent reference to The Sun's April 11, 1968, editorial. It took Agnew to task for his handling of a meeting in which he criticized Negro moderates for failing to repudiate "inflammatory statements" by black militants prior to Baltimore rioting in 1968.

The Sun further quoted Thompson yesterday:

"Editorially, they (The Sun) don't like Mr. Agnew and make it clear in their editorials. It hurts him. He feels he is a home town boy and instead of taking pride in him, it (The Sun) acts like it is ashamed of him. He's not going out of his way to do some-

thing for The Sun."

'Private Conversation'

Thompson said yesterday that his statements quoted in The Sun were "in a private conversation" with Philip Potter, the Sun's Washington bureau chief, in response to specific statements by Potter.

When Potter said that The Sun should get special consideration because it is the Vice President's hometown paper and because, he said, it had supported him in two elections, I took issue with this."

Potter denied yesterday that he had sought favored treatment for his paper. He said that Thompson made his statements about Agnew's not liking The Sun's editorial policies after he asked Thompson "if there were any other reasons" why The Sun's application had been rejected. Potter said his story was "completely accurate."

Thompson said Agnew "regretted that we didn't have room to take everyone who applied." Some thought was given to chartering a special press plane, he said, but there were not enough applicants.

He said that there would have to be about 60 newsmen to make a charter flight economically feasible to many of the newspapers and magazines that wanted to make the trip.

Thompson said the The Associated Press also was turned down on a request to send a photographer along with its reporter and that the networks had been turned down on a request to bring along five-man camera crews each. The total number of people rejected is 32.