

Agnew Assails 'Tired Elders,' 'Choleric Young Intellectuals'

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Vice President Agnew charged last night that "choleric young intellectuals and tired, embittered elders" were trying to undermine President Nixon's efforts to win "a just peace" in southeast Asia.

Agnew spoke at a Republican dinner in Boise, Idaho, where state officials assigned 100 National Guardsmen to protect him.

In his prepared text, the Vice President also accused Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) of "the baldest and most reactionary plea for isolationism" in the Senate since the days before World War II.

The speech defending the Administration's decision to send troops into Cambodia came a day after President Nixon reportedly promised that he would tone down hostile rhetoric about the Nation's students by Agnew and other high Administration officials.

The Vice President's talk consisted largely of a measured justification of the Cambodian raids, but it began with characteristic bite.

Assails 'Jeremiahs'

"At every period of great challenge in this Nation's history," he said, "debate has always included a cadre of Jeremiahs; normally a gloomy coalition of choleric young intellectuals and tired, embittered elders."

These "Jeremiahs," he said, are now mounting shrill attacks against the administration's policies "in what could only appear as a conscious attempt to rekindle the debilitating fires of riot and unrest that had been banked by the continuing commitment of President Nixon to end the war."

Instead, Agnew said, it was time for the Nation to stand firm in support of the President. He said he was confident that it would.

Agnew flew to Boise for the talk after taping a television

interview in Los Angeles where he said the killing of four Kent State University students by National Guardsmen may have been "murder... but not first degree."

Agnew dealt with the Kent State killings in a 90-minute appearance on the David Frost show which will be telecast next Wednesday.

At one point on the show, Frost asked him: "If it is discovered that there was no shot fired at them (the Guardsmen) by a sniper, and they just opened fire without a warning shot or anything—not having been fired at in any way—is the word for that 'murder'?"

"Yes," Agnew replied. "But not first degree."

'No Premeditation'

"As a lawyer," the Vice President continued, "I am conversant with the fact that where there is no premeditation but simply an over-response in the heat of anger that results in a killing, it is a murder. It is not a (sic) premeditated, but it is a murder, and it certainly can't be condoned, but I would guess that if a very volatile young man got a brick in the neck or in the ribs, he might just blow up and do something like that."

In this Boise talk, Agnew contended that the military situation in Indochina had "greatly deteriorated" within days of President Nixon's April 20 announcement of plans to withdraw 150,000 American troops from Vietnam.

Calling the Communist response "painfully clear," he said enemy troops moved out of their Cambodian base areas "in a bold attempt to change the border area from a series of isolated enclaves... into a solid band of self-sustaining territory stretching to the sea."

"Suddenly we faced the prospect of Cambodia becoming one large base area for attacks along the 600 miles of the Cambodia-ARVN frontier," Agnew said. "And ominously, the Communists were challenging our warnings and our credibility."

The Vice President said the

principal target of the Cambodian raids is not personnel but the enemy's "logistical infrastructure." He decried what he called "the arcane interpretations of the decision by some media commentators" and said:

"There has been much nonsense in the press about a supposed failure to find the Communist headquarters. We have no expectation of capturing the actual headquarters personnel, nor do we know that they are in any one area at a given time."

Nixon Address Cited

In his April 30 address to the Nation, Mr. Nixon had said at one point: "Tonight, American and South Vietnamese units will attack the headquarters for the entire Communist military operation in South Vietnam. This key control center has been occupied by the North Vietnamese and Vietcong for five years in blatant violation of Cambodia's neutrality."

Last night, however, Agnew said: "Our objective is to destroy their communications facilities and above all, their supply dumps."

In this, he predicted success, adding that it, in turn, "will buy at least eight months during which these base areas cannot support military operations in South Vietnam."

So far, Agnew said, allied casualties have been light and significant enemy caches are being discovered. He called the amount of supplies uncovered thus far "in itself surprising since we did not expect to uncover the major supply areas at the outset."

Reviewing the President's reasons for the raids, the Vice President said he wanted to emphasize one in particular: U. S. determination "to reaffirm our credibility and decisiveness when these qualities have been sharply questioned not only by Hanoi but by others."

This point, Agnew said, may have been "obscured in some minds" since "unfortunately, those protesters and commentators who have cried doom and defeat with an almost unprecedented intemperance may have confused the effect of our resolve in Hanoi and other equally important capitals."

Alludes to Moscow

Clearly alluding to Moscow, Agnew said the Cambodian decision's relevance to the Middle East situation "should be obvious."

President Nixon, Agnew said, would still prefer to end the war through negotiations, but above all is determined to end it "with a just peace with-

out depending upon the good faith of the Communists."

If negotiations continue to be blocked in Paris "and the Communist delegation does no more than continue to read statements from Senator Fulbright at our negotiators," the Vice President said, Vietnamization of the war and U.S. troop withdrawals will continue apace until South Vietnam can "stand on its own."

Agnew was especially critical of Fulbright for remarks on the Senate floor several weeks ago asserting that "the central fact about Indochina including Vietnam is that it doesn't matter much who rules in these small and backward lands."

The Vice President criticized the speech as "the blindest and most reactionary plea for isolationism heard in that chamber since the heyday of the 'America-firsters.'"

Dismissing critics such as the Arkansas Senator as lacking "enlightened vision and imaginative ideas," Agnew asserted that neither emotional attacks nor "the rigid mythology of liberal ideologues" should be permitted to "drown out objective discussion and analysis of the events of recent weeks in the Vietnam war."

In his interview with David Frost, the Vice President was asked about Secretary of Interior Walter Hickel's letter to Mr. Nixon, which was critical of Agnew's speeches.

Agnew said he didn't believe his "old friend" Hickel had read them carefully enough. "If he had read them," the Vice President said, "he would understand that I have never criticized young people as a group . . ."