

# Nixon: Free Press Guards Liberty; Agnew: Not All of It Tells Both Sides

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President Nixon yesterday hailed a free press as a "guardian of liberty" while Vice President Agnew returned to his attack on part of the press for failing to tell both sides of a story.

The two leaders spoke at different times before the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers, made up of publishers of free world papers.

Mr. Nixon addressed the group last night in the East Room, declaring that "a free press is essential to the survival of freedom."

The Vice President told his group earlier in the day that

the practice of "telling both sides of the story . . . has gone out of vogue in some of the major news organizations in America."

Mr. Nixon spoke informally and without notes to the publishers and their wives at a White House reception.

He recalled that "one of my predecessors," whom he did not name, once suffered a "particularly brutal beating" from the press for several weeks.

A close friend in Congress went to the White House to commiserate with the President and said "wouldn't it be wonderful to wake up and not see those critical editorials and cartoons every morning."

"No, it wouldn't," the former President replied, Mr. Nixon said. The former President went on to say that he was glad the press could hold government leaders to account, Mr. Nixon reported.

"The fact is you can get up and occasionally see a friendly editorial or a friendly cartoon—a friendly cartoon, that's very difficult in this town," the President commented.

Nevertheless, he said that while free world leaders do not always agree with their critics they know they perform an essential function if freedom is to survive.

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## SPEECHES, From A1

The Vice President also declared that he fully supported press freedom, but he said his differences with "some of the news media" have come "not over their right to criticize government or public officials but my right to criticize them when I think they have been excessive or irresponsible in their criticism."

He disclosed that before he took office as Vice President outgoing President Johnson "warned me against 'taking on' the press."

"Just remember this," he quoted the former President as saying, "they come out every day; you don't."

### Notes Responsibility

Nevertheless, the Vice Presi-

dent said he firmly believed "that with freedom goes responsibility . . . telling both sides of the story."

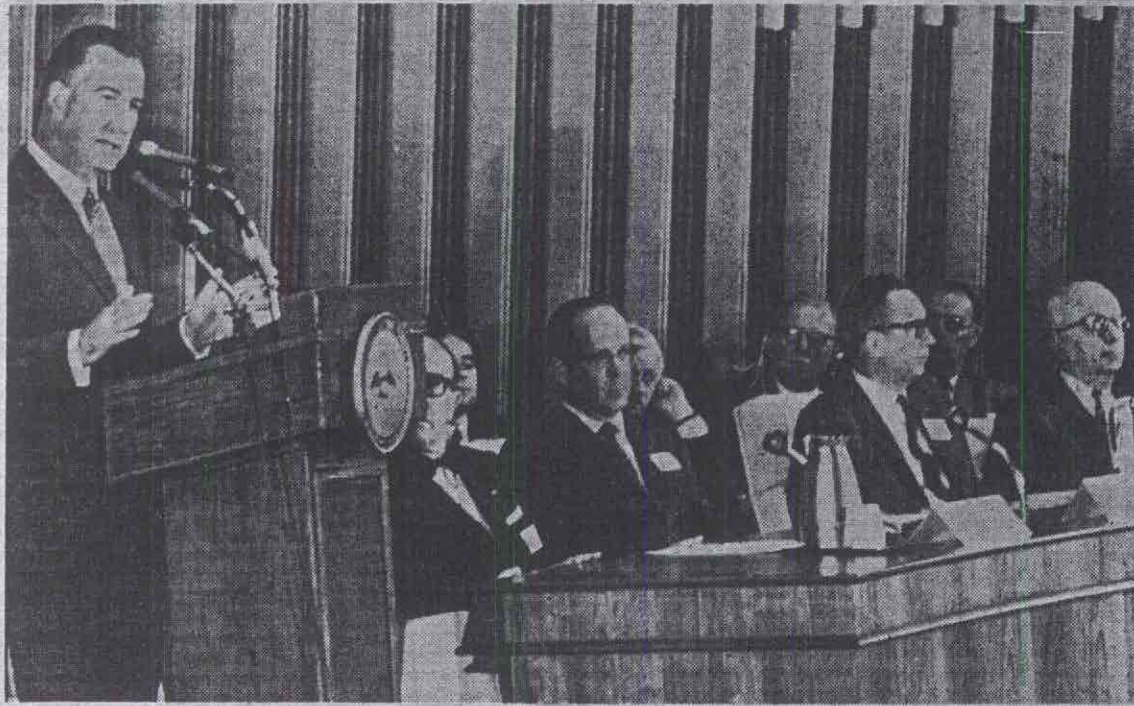
"The price for not presenting both sides of a story is loss of credibility as a public institution," he said. "It is a heavy price to pay for a fleeting exercise in power or influence."

Agnew said he found it "extremely frustrating" to find "only one side of the Vietnam war . . . emphasized by some of our most influential newspapers and television networks."

Overall, he added, "their coverage comes off slanted against American involvement in that war without any attempt at balance."

He did not name the newspapers or networks he was criticizing.

"We see paraded daily all of the reasons we should not be involved and none that we



United Press International

Vice President Agnew charges that some news organizations have lost credibility because they do not report both sides of an issue. In front row, from left, are Claude Belanger, President of the International Federation of News-

paper Publishers; Robert Blacklidge, president of the American Newspaper Publishers Assn.; Stanford Smith, ANPA general manager; Alberto Gainza Paz, Argentine publisher. President Nixon later hailed free world press.

should," the Vice President told the publishers.

"We read of alleged American atrocities of civilians in a hamlet called Mylai, but virtually nothing of the even more atrocious slaughter of Vietnamese civilians in the major city of Hue by the terrorist enemy invader."

Agnew said the media make

much of the fact that America equips South Vietnamese soldiers to fight in Cambodia but little about "Russian-equipped North Vietnamese, who have invaded that country by the thousands as they did South Vietnam and Laos."

Hanoi has no free press to tell the world of its atrocities, he said, and the free world press should give its readers both sides of the story.

"I submit that it is the mission of the press to inform the public rather than try to persuade it; that the public, given sufficient information, can make a sound decision."

#### Replies to Critics

Speaking later at a Republican fund-raising dinner in Detroit, Agnew said "we cannot govern with the consent of the governed unless we respect the right of dissent of the governed. But remember, respect for the right of dissent does not mandate agreement with the dissent."

In the Detroit speech

Agnew, replying to those who have criticized his "rhetoric," quoted some harsh comments such famous men as Winston Churchill and John Randolph of Virginia made against political opponents.

Arguing that he had never used such extreme language, he said "the times have changed and the climate is wrong for slambang vituperation."

"Let us, then, elevate the rhetoric," the Vice President said. "Let us think through all

we stand for, and then stand for it publicly and affirmatively."

He summarized "rules of rhetoric" laid down by "my ancestor Aristotle" that "every view is a proper target for rational challenge, every challenge is a proper target for criticism and rebuttal, no view has a claim on truth by virtue of wide acceptance... no majority has the obligation to be silent or the right to overwhelm dissent."