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Agnew a Symbol of Nixon Drive To Dispel Far-Right Challenge

BENEATH ALL the sound and the fury surrounding Vice President Spiro Agnew (and God knows there is plenty of both) a dispassionate White House strategy for isolating and dispersing the threat from the American Far Right is now unfolding.

Agnew is symbol and catalyst for a drive to destroy in advance the third- or fourth-party aspirations that may be held for 1972 by such as George Wallace of Alabama. The point is that, in order to deal effectively with the Far Right, it is first of all necessary to attack the Far Left head-on, so as at minimum to dilute its minority but extremely vocal power and its undoubted capacity to make right-wing extremists out of people who normally are perfectly sensible.

For the George Wallaces, paradoxical though this may seem at first glance, are made by nobody but the Far Left, whose automatic anti-traditionalism and extremist actions provoke precisely the extremist reactions at the other end of the stick which can alone create a Wallace in the first place.

These factors, then, define the real meaning of Spiro Agnew. Indeed, moderates and responsible Liberals should welcome or at least understand his activities, however angry some of them may become at his rhetoric. For what he is doing is not only strengthening the political center but also uttering some long-needed home truths to the so-called Eastern Liberal Establishment.

THE MOST CRUCIAL of

these home truths, which this columnist first anxiously sensed and reported on at the Goldwater convention in 1964, is that this establishment has long since pushed its luck much too far with the rest of the country. The consequence has been that this nation has suffered unnecessary and grievous vertical divisions, with the Atlantic seaboard standing alone in a really quite absurd superiority complex against the interior East, the Middle West, the South, the mountain West and the Far West, too, but for such enclaves of toadyism toward the East as exist in California.

These vertical divisions are quite as real as, and far more dangerous to, national political health than the very old and very sad horizontal division formed by the Mason-Dixon line.

The long and short of it is that President Nixon is using Agnew both to challenge the essentially puerile pretensions of the Eastern Establishment to an "elite" status in every aspect of life and to gather up on the President's side all the other sections of the country.

THIS IS THUS no more a "Southern strategy" than a Middle-Western or a West-

ern strategy. And, far from contemplating some rallying of right-wing extremists, it seeks instead a concert of middling-minded men and women, many of whom would otherwise leap in total frustration over to the Wallace side.

For if there is one genuine peril to sensible government, it lies in the possibility of the emergence of an irrationally swollen right-wing movement brought into being by the very arrogance of an ultra-liberal left that has for practical purposes seized the Eastern Establishment.

Anybody who questions that Agnew is doing the job described here can resolve his doubts if he will simply forget the irrelevant matter of whether he "likes" the Vice President and look instead at two towering objective realities.

The first is that most congressional mail is running almost ridiculously heavy in his favor. The other is a Gallup poll plainly proving that Nixon-Agnew Republicanism is already deeply cutting into the old Wallace constituency.