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**Agnew Obscures  
Nixon Doctrine**

WASHINGTON — If you've seen one Agnew, you've apparently seen them all. First, the State Department had to disown and deny background information deriving from the Agnew party in Manila; then, in Thailand, Agnew's conversations raised the question whether there really is a "Nixon Doctrine" for a new American approach to Asia. In between, the Vice President did get through his Vietnamese stopover without any of those horrendous exaggerations that so many eminent officials have left behind in that deceptive country—where Vice President Lyndon Johnson said in 1961 that Ngo Dinh Diem was the "Winston Churchill of Asia" and President Nixon said last year that the war was one of America's "finest hours."

Agnew also gave the word to Chiang Kai-Shek in Taiwan that Nixon intends to open communications with the Communist Chinese in Peking.

Then came Bangkok. There, Agnew first reverted to the kind of bear-baiting tactics that have made him so beloved among American young people, war critics, television commentators, newspaper reporters, ghetto residents and corpulent Japanese; some Americans, he said, were "so anxious to make friends of our enemies that sometimes they even seem ready to make enemies of our friends." And one of his Thai hosts, Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman, quoted the Vice President as saying that statements by critics of the American-Thai relationship were only personal and were aimed at creating disunity between the two countries.

These are really rather disreputable allegations against the motives and character of quite a few students of American foreign policy who may be wrong in their view of the world, a judgment Agnew would be perfectly entitled to make, but who have done nothing to deserve the charge that they wish to turn friends into enemies, or that they are striving to create international ill-feeling — charges which neither the vice president nor even his sponsor in the White House has any standing whatsoever to make, nor any evidence to sustain.

All of this could be dismissed as Agnew's idea of being hard-nosed, except that he went on to raise serious questions about the so-called Nixon Doctrine. Since the President enunciated it last summer at Guam, this has been understood to be an approach to Asia that would support its developing nations against attack or subversion with money, advice, equip-

ment and cheers, but not with American troops.

Just this week, Majority Leader Mansfield hailed this doctrine as meaning that "the only way we would ever become involved again" in an Asian war "would be when our security was at stake and a nuclear showdown appeared to be in the offing. In other words, when there was no possible choice."

Yet, Thanat, who takes a notoriously hawkish view of Southeast Asian security matters, was able to say after his talks with Agnew that the vice president had "strongly asserted that there will be no change in American policy and no lessening of United States commitments to Thailand and South-east Asia."

If so, Agnew's pledges appear to be in contradiction of the Nixon doctrine. They are in direct and specific contradiction of an appropriations rider approved by the Senate on Dec. 15, specifying that no American combat troops could be used in Thailand or Laos without congressional approval. One specific aim of that rider was a secret American-Thai "contingency" plan developed in 1965; it provided for the commitment of American troops to the defense of Thailand in certain circumstances that were far broader than those envisioned by the SEATO Treaty, and by presidential decision without any need for congressional approval.

Since Thailand said last year it had no intention ever to seek American troops (despite the evidence of the 1965 agreement), and since SEATO supposedly provides for the constitutional process of a congressional declaration of war to be observed, it may be argued that neither the Nixon doctrine nor the Senate vote changed the relationship that had existed between Washington and Bangkok, hence that Agnew was factually correct in assuring Thanat that nothing had changed.

At the least, the Agnew journey has raised the question whether there really is a Nixon doctrine that constitutes a new policy for Asia. If Agnew's version of it is taken at face value, the doctrine appears to be more for home consumption.

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