

Pat Walker

MEDIA

# Whitehead: Proposal Won't Lead to Censorship

By Tom Stales

Administration spokesman Clay T. Whitehead yesterday denied that his proposed new broadcast legislation could lead to government censorship of the news.

Answering a charge by Sen. Vance Hartke (D-Ind.) Whitehead said on a CBS morning news program that "Our intent is 100 per cent to the contrary... What we want is to have the broadcaster be a very independent man, a leader in his community who exercises responsibility for what he shows to his community."

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that local stations be held accountable for the content of network newscasts they televise and that this be a factor in the renewal of their licenses by the Federal Communications Commission.

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In his speech, Whitehead used the phrase "ideological plugola" to describe what he considered partisan opinions broadcast by the networks as news. CBS reporter Nel-

son Benton pressed him for examples of such "plugola" in the interview.

"I don't want to cite any specifics," Whitehead replied. "This is not a vendetta against any particular individuals or any particular network."

Further broadcasting industry reaction to the speech from ABC network anchorman Howard K. Smith, who on his newscast last night associated what he called Whitehead's "threats" with the jailing of news reporters who refused to reveal confidential news sources.

"I hope it is not so,"

Smith said, "but it begins to look like a general assault on reporters."

Whitehead's proposals and the "the courts' destruction of confidentiality" could lead to a time when "we will live solely by government handout," Smith said.

"Banners of outrage have unfurled all over New York with great thwacking sounds," said John Chancellor, anchorman for NBC, from his New York office. "I prefer to wait and see how dangerous this is going to get. I think it will be terribly difficult to put the proposal into workable legisla-

tive language. It may just die a-borning."

"We've been watching (our affiliates) ever since the first Agnew speech in 1969," Chancellor said. "I haven't seen even so much as a murmur from the affiliates. There is no revolt among the affiliated stations."

CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite could not be reached for comment.