

Nixon Statement About Agnew

Washington

Following is the text of a statement by President Nixon regarding the allegations against Vice President Spiro T. Agnew:

I held a discussion with the vice president this morning about the charges that have been made against him in the course of an investigation being conducted in Baltimore under the direction of the United States attorney for Maryland.

This discussion followed an assessment of the situation which was presented to me by Attorney General (Elliot) Richardson and Assistant Attorney General (Henry E.) Petersen.

During our discussion, the vice president again — as he had done in our previous meetings — denied the charges that have been made against him. He also informed me that he intended to request that the House of Representatives undertake an inquiry into the matter.

I wish to emphasize my strong belief that during these proceedings the vice president is entitled to the same presumption of innocence which is the right of any citizen, and which lies at the heart of our system of justice. During these past 4½ years, the vice president has served his country with dedication and distinction. He has won the respect of millions of Americans for the candor and courage with which he has addressed the controversial issues of our time. As he moves through this difficult period, I urge all Americans to accord the vice president the basic, decent consideration and presumption of innocence that are both his right and his due.

United Press