

Agnew Calls Bill a Plan 'For Defeat'

New York Times

Miami Beach

Vice President Spiro Agnew, declaring that the Nixon Administration is prepared to see the Vietnam war to "an honorable end," charged yesterday that a Senate proposal for a fixed withdrawal of American troops was "a blueprint for the first defeat in the history of the United States."

Agnew launched an attack, in a speech to cheering members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, on an "amendment to end the war" and its chief sponsors, Senators Mark O. Hatfield (Rep-Ore.) and George S. McGovern (Dem-S.D.).

"One wonders if they really give a damn," said the vice president, about the possible consequences of their plan to halt American combat operations in South Vietnam at the end of this year and bring all U.S. troops home by mid-1971.

CHARGES

Agnew said passage of the amendment would destroy prospects for a negotiated settlement in Paris, leave the South Vietnamese prey to a Communist slaughter, imperil other allies in Southeast Asia and offer the American people nothing more than "humiliation and disaster" for its combat efforts.

Agnew, who entered and exited to the strains of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," repeatedly was interrupted by applause.

He drew his loudest cheers when he asked: "Can the President of the United States count on your support?"

PROPOSAL

Agnew acknowledged that his charges were "among the strongest since I took office" 19 months ago, but said that the Hatfield-McGovern proposal was the most dangerous presented to Congress in 19 years.

In Washington, McGovern issued a statement saying the real defeat would be to continue "on a self-defeating course which is slaughtering the people of Southeast Asia, wasting the lives of American men and disrupting both

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Pullout Bill

Agnew's Attack On Senate Doves

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the American economy and our society."

Senate Republican leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania told reporters he favored an accelerated withdrawal of American forces, but agreed with Agnew that the Hatfield-McGovern amendment would be a "precipitous retreat."

INTENTION

Agnew's remarks were not unlike his earlier assaults on Senate critics of the Nixon Administration's Vietnam policy. They reflected as well the intentions of the White House to reassure Asian allies that Mr. Nixon has no plan to turn his back on them — a message the vice president will carry to South Korea, Thailand, Nationalist China and South Vietnam next week.

But Agnew stated yesterday, more forcefully than any administration official has done, the White House view that the war in South Vietnam has prevented a Communist takeover of Southeast Asia.

"Are the isolationists content to let Asia go by default to the Communists because they lacked the perseverance to see this through?" he asked.

"Well, we are not, my fellow Americans and my fellow veterans—and the President is not—and together we shall see this war through to an honorable end that will do justice to the sacrifices of all our sons."

TRUST

If Americans abandon South Vietnam, he added,

"Could any Nation put trust in the word and capacity of the United States—if we slink home, defeated, from the battlefield of Southeast Asia?"

Agnew assailed Senate doves, including Senator J. William Fulbright (Dem-Ark.), chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, who argue that the President's decision to send troops into Cambodia underscored the need to place limits on a President's war-making powers.

Instead, said the Vice President, the decision, which he called "the finest hour in the Nixon presidency," makes the case that the Senate "should leave the President alone" to take necessary steps to protect American troops.

PATRIOTISM

Agnew said he did not question the patriotism of Hatfield and McGovern, but found fault with "their wisdom, their logic and their judgment—and I question also their sense of justice."

He said he found it ironic that Senators who did not speak out while President Johnson sent 532,000 troops to Vietnam "are obstructing and undercutting a President who is bringing 265,000 Americans home."

Agnew was introduced to the convention by VFW Commander-in-Chief Raymond Gallagher, who presented the Vice President with the VFW Gold Medal Award.

"The Vice President . . . said Gallagher, "has injected into our national life a forthrightness and candor rarely found among political leaders."