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Red Carpet for Agnew

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A relaxed, smiling Spiro T. Agnew returned to the White House Thursday night, this time a round of applause this time to a round of applause from 110 dinner guests waiting in the East Room.

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The Vice President, whose case involving charges of kickbacks went before a special federal grand jury in Baltimore Thursday was the administration's ranking guest at a dinner given by President Nixon for New Zealand Prime Minister Norman E. Kirk.

Unlike a week ago at a dinner Mr. Nixon gave for Pakistan's Prime Minister Zulfikar Bhutto when some thought the White House snubbed Agnew, the Vice President Thursday night was introduced with fanfare.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” began the White House aide over the public address system, “the Vice President of the United States and Mrs. Agnew and the honorable Secretary of State . . .”

Applause for Agnew erupted at that point, drowning out Henry Kissinger's name.

Agnew initially declined the dinner invitation because of a speaking engagement in California. He subsequently accepted the invitation after delaying his speechmaking trip until this weekend.

After dinner, described by the White House as a “working” dinner, there was no entertainment except music to dance by.

For the first time in public since daughter Tricia's wedding in June, 1971, the President took Mrs. Nixon in his arms and danced a slow foxtrot to the tune of “Sound of Music,” played by Howard Devron and his band.

The Nixons had been on their way to the White House usher's office, after seeing Kirk out of the front

door, when Mrs. Nixon said something to the President. They changed direction, walking over to Devron to shake his hand and thank members of his orchestra.

As they headed toward the usher's office, Mr. Nixon took Mrs. Nixon in his arms to foxtrot across the lobby and disappear through the office door.

Earlier, as Agnew stood in the Blue Room following dinner, he talked affably about his present and future plans.

“The Democrats gave me a very nice reception,” he said. “I don't regard Speaker (Carl) Albert's decision (not to hear the Agnew case) as being permanent.”

He declined to seriously discuss his lawyers' strategy in defending him against charges brought before the Baltimore grand jury Thursday.

“I never ask my lawyers what they are going to do,” he joked. “Anybody who tries to get anything out of his lawyers has a lawyer for a fool, or maybe it's the other way around—has a fool for a lawyer.”

Agnew said he planned to leave Friday morning for California where he will “of course,” as he put it, stay with his Frank Sinatra and play some golf.

He appeared to be enjoying himself so much that the red carpet at the front door was kept down longer than usual. When one guest asked a White House guard why the carpet had not been removed after Kirk had left, the guard replied that the carpet was “waiting for the Vice President.”

Henry Kissinger, also in a joking mood, said that his official hostess for State Department entertaining will be selected by computer and will be rotated.

Asked when he first felt that he had actually become Secretary of State (he was confirmed a week ago), Kissinger quipped, evoking a roar of laughter from those

listening in, “Four years ago.”

In the official party with Prime Minister Kirk were Foreign Affairs Secretary Frank H. Corner, former ambassador to Washington, and Ambassador and Mrs. Lloyd W. te.

Four U.S. senators, William B. Saxbe (R-Ohio), Jennings Randolph (D-W.Va.), Dewey F. Bartlett (R-Okla.) and James A. McClure (R-Ida.), missed out on most of the dinner when they were called back to the Capitol to vote. Three roll calls later, they returned in time for dessert.

The President's brother, F. Donald Nixon, was on the guest list but did not attend because he was undergoing physical tests, according to his wife.

Saying that she had no comment on reports that the Secret Service had tapped her husband's telephone, she added that both she and her husband think the President “is the most fantastic and the greatest leader that this country has ever had. We love him dearly.”

When one reporter persisted, “You didn't mind having your phones tapped?”

“Not at all,” she said.

Others among the guests included at least two \$10,000-plus contributors to Mr. Nixon's 1972 campaign. They were Joseph M. Segal, president of Philadelphia's Franklin Mint, who reportedly contributed at least \$105,601, and John H. Perry Jr., president of a Palm Beach, Fla., oceanographic firm, who contributed at least \$88,006.

The widow of baseball star Jackie Robinson was one of those invited, along with Edward V. Jones, the Albany, Ga., architect who has helped Mrs. Nixon redecorate the White House.

For the third consecutive White House dinner, the groaning board was beefless. Supreme of Royal Squab Smitane with wild rice was the main dish.