

Agnew Guards Seen Illegal by GAO

By Lou Cannon

Washington Post Staff Writer

The General Accounting Office said yesterday that Secret Service agents apparently are being assigned illegally to former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew.

In a preliminary report the GAO also said that at least \$100,000 had been spent to provide aides and offices for Agnew since he left office Oct. 10 and admitted income tax

evasion violations. This sum does not include the cost of Secret Service protection.

The GAO inquiry was undertaken at the request of Rep. John Moss (D-Calif.), who questioned the propriety of assigning Secret Service agents to Agnew.

The reply from Comptroller General Elmer B. Staats to Moss questioned the legality of the assignment.

"... We are aware of no statutory authority for expenditures relating to Secret Service protection of Mr. Agnew," Staats wrote.

A spokesman for Staats said it is conceivable but unlikely that Agnew himself could ultimately be charged with a bill for his federal bodyguards.

The agency, he said, would defer to Congress for any action on the Agnew matter.

In his letter to Moss the comptroller general complained of White House ef-

forts to block his attempts at obtaining more information. Staats also said the Secret Service had refused to answer a request for detailed data.

The GAO, in an attempt to provide the information requested by Moss, arranged a meeting with Brig. Gen. John (Mike) Dunn, the former head of Agnew's staff who has since joined Vice President Gerald R. Ford. Dunn agreed to meet with GAO representatives on Nov. 19.

"Before that meeting took place, however, Mr. Bruce Kehrl, special assistant to the President, advised us that General Dunn might not meet with us until after he had made a written request to the White House for the desired information and a written response had been forthcoming..." the GAO report said.

Alexander M. Haig Jr., the White House chief of staff, finally replied to the GAO on

Dec. 11. But the letter needed clarification, and no meeting has been held, Staats said.

The preliminary report said that salaries for non-Secret Service personnel assigned to Agnew total \$89,132 from Oct. 10 to Dec. 4.

The cost of Agnew's offices overlooking Lafayette Park across from the White House is \$2,075 a month. Other costs included \$287 for free mailing privileges, \$877 for office supplies and \$960 to move Agnew's files from the Executive Office Building.

The Secret Service protection for Agnew was ordered by President Nixon for an unspecified time after he resigned.

The GAO said the President's instructions "may be immaterial since we are not aware of any specific authority of law for providing Secret Service protection for former Vice Presidents."