

Agnew Angers Prosecutor

By Richard M. Cohen
and Jules Witcover

Washington Post Staff Writers

The man who prosecuted former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew expressed anger yesterday at Agnew's recent statement that the government's case against him "rested entirely" on the testimony of persons seeking to save their own skins.

"I say he doesn't know what he's talking about," said George Beall, the former U.S. attorney for Maryland.

Beall characterized Agnew's statements as the beginning of a "rehabilitation campaign"—one the prosecutors had foreseen when they allowed Agnew to plead "no contest" to a single charge of tax evasion.

Beall was reacting to an interview with the Associated Press in which Agnew emphasized that he had admitted only to tax evasion. "I categorically deny the rest," Agnew told the AP, "and some day, when the various court cases are over, I'll be able to speak freely.

"The government's case for extortion, bribery and conspiracy rested entirely on the testimony of individuals who had already confessed to criminal acts and who had been granted partial immunity in exchange for their testimony against me."

Beall said that Agnew's account of the evidence against him did not square with the facts. He added, though, that he feared few persons would bother to read the 40 pages of evidence the government released the day Agnew resigned before pleading "no contest" in October, 1973.

"Who will speak out?" Beall asked. "How many people will examine the record? The record is there."

Beall said that Agnew's statements angered and depressed him because they cast doubt on his abilities as a lawyer. "It hurts me," he said. "It really depresses me. I try to be as objective as possible, but I cannot be."

In a telephone interview from London, U.S. Ambassador Elliot L. Richardson, Attorney General at the time of the Agnew in-



Associated Press

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vestigation and resignation, said he was not surprised at Agnew's latest denials and had "no regrets" about how the case was disposed.

"I think what we did was right," said Richardson, who was the chief advocate of plea bargaining to secure Agnew's resignation. That approach, he said, eliminated the need for impeachment action against Agnew at a particularly critical time, when President Nixon was fighting for political survival.

"I think it was fortunate in the circumstances that we didn't precipitate a trial (of Agnew) in the Senate at the same time impeachment (of Nixon) was going forward in the House," Richardson said.

Richardson said he knew "the result would leave him (Agnew) in a position to make whatever self-serving statements he wanted," but it was worth that price to get Agnew out of office and the case against him on the public record.

William Ruckelshaus, who was deputy attorney general at the time and now is a Washington lawyer, also

defended the decision and said the detailed exposition of evidence "was what drove him out of office. That 40-page document was devastating."

Ruckelshaus said Agnew's latest denials were anticipated. "We assumed in the worst of all possible worlds, this is what he'd do," he said. "But it was still better to bring it to a quick decision. It boiled down to whether or not to replace a beleaguered Vice President in the face of a beleaguered President. In the light of history, Richardson was right."

Jonathan Moore, a chief Richardson aide in the Agnew deliberations and now director of the Institute of Politics at Harvard, said Agnew's denials "don't change anything" in the case.

"He decided to resign," Moore said. "Is he saying now that he shouldn't have resigned?" Moore asked. "He decided to resign, and as far as I know he's still resigned. He's not Vice President, and he's not President either. If you look back at the whole Watergate matter, I don't

know how anyone can say it wasn't the right decision. Gerald Ford is President, not Spiro Agnew."

Agnew Working to Aid Nonprofit Foundation

By John Woodfield

Associated Press

CROFTON, Md., Nov. 1—Former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew is beginning a public emergence for the first time since his resignation two years ago, with sponsorship of a nonprofit foundation "to promote, encourage and support the development of public understanding and appreciation of the advantages of a democratic society."

He said there is a vacuum that needs to be filled with conservative views.

Some 250 letters over Agnew's signature were mailed out last weekend seeking contributions for the "Education for Democracy" foundation. Agnew remarked proudly that already "six or seven responses have been received with donations of slightly more than \$1,000."

"Fewer than 500 of these letters will be sent and each is to someone I know personally—someone I believe shares my concern," he said in an interview.

Headed by John A. Von Kannon, an Indiana conservative, the foundation was established in 1971, but remained basically dormant until Agnew decided to "activate" it about a year ago.

In the letter of solicitation for the foundation, Agnew said that "for the past two years, I have waited for more well-known, national spokesmen (yes, I said spokesmen, not spokespersons) to take up the fight against the apologists for the revolutionaries who are intent on destroying the strengths of our great country."

But, he said, he was "tired of waiting, and perhaps you are, too. . . ."

The former Vice President said he wanted "to emphasize that I'm not planning to use this foundation as a base for flying around the country and making political speeches or anything like that. That's not what it's intended for."