

Agnew Office Confirms Threat Against Daughter

By Marilyn Berger
Washington Post Staff Writer

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew's office yesterday confirmed that Agnew's daughter, Susan, 26, has cut short her work on a hospital ship off Brazil because of threats against her life.

But Brazilian federal police denied that the Vice President's daughter had been threatened. Similarly, neither the U.S. embassy, nor officials at the floating hospital ship where Miss Agnew was working, knew of any threat. The State Department here had no comment, and the Brazilian ambassador said he learned of the report in the newspaper.

Miss Agnew returned to Washington Monday evening. "This was a family decision," said Marsh Thomson, Agnew's spokesman. "Her family decided, on recommendation, that this was more than ordinary risk and that she should return."

The Vice President's daughter had sailed from Baltimore, in February, on the SS Hope, a medical-teaching ship founded by Dr. William Walsh also now anchored off Maceio in northeast Brazil. Walsh said yesterday that he knew of kidnapping threats against Susan in the past but of no specific threats against her life. But he said he had left the ship before the current threat.

"Apparently they put greater credence in it than before," Walsh said.

The Vice President's office issued a statement which said, "There have been threats on her life down there, and although the Brazilians thought they could take care of the situation and the Vice President has expressed his confidence in the ability of the Brazilian government to provide necessary security, as a father he wanted to take the prudent measure of bringing her closer to home."

Thomson said Agnew was "informed officially" about the threats, which the Brazilian police considered serious.

How the information was transmitted was not immediately clear. The Brazilian ambassador in Washington said his office had not informed the Vice President. "The first time I knew about it was when I read it in the paper," said Ambassador Joao Augusto de Araujo Castro. "We have no information whatsoever."

Nobel Cuiabano, federal police officer in Maceio, where the ship is anchored, told United Press International: "There was



SUSAN AGNEW

... back in Washington

never any threat against her physical security, including kidnaping, during the time that Miss Agnew stayed in Maceio. . . I think that her return can be attributed to the problems her family is having and perhaps she was homesick for her parents."

Cuiabano said two agents were constantly assigned to protect her. "We never received any complaint from Miss Agnew or any other person that said she had been threatened with kidnaping," Cuiabano said.

Officials of the SS Hope and at the American embassy also said they knew of no recent threats against Miss Agnew, UPI reported from Rio de Janeiro. "We do not know where the security problem arose," said Dr. Dennis Lucey, Hope's administrator. "We are in the dark."

Thomson said he could not elaborate on how the Vice President received the information, but said Agnew has access to "official communications channels." State Department officials also could add nothing to the comments from the Vice President's office.

Walsh said Miss Agnew was considered valuable as a subject for exchange of political prisoners. The last Brazilian political kidnaping of a foreigner occurred in 1971, when the German ambassador was taken by terrorists.

Walsh said Miss Agnew was under Brazilian protec-

tion. "Whenever they would get a threat . . . or hear rumors of a plan they would advise us and advise us if they thought it was serious or not serious.

"For example, at the time Secretary of State [William P.] Rogers' trip [to Brazil] they requested her to stay on the ship for fear she would be a target. She did stay on board. This time they apparently put greater credence on these threats than before.

He added that "Susan and her father are very close. . . He just made a parental decision this time."

Miss Agnew was to have stayed on the SS Hope until December. "Just before I left on Aug. 20" said Walsh, "she told me that this was the best year in her entire life. . . She was working hard; she was just as conscientious as could be. Everybody on the ship loved her."

Her job involved audio-visual education in lectures and taping of various medical procedures. She earned \$30 a month, and often worked more than 12 hours a day.

Miss Agnew told The Washington Star-News that she did not know the exact details of the threat against her. "Father asked if I would come home and I didn't want him to worry about it. I never saw a threatening letter. I got word over the weekend from Washington," she was quoted as saying. She said that her father's current political situation had no bearing on her return.

"I don't feel any cause for concern because I know my father is an honest person," she was quoted as saying.