



Rocky Was Only 'Trying to Help'

Mary McGrory

VICE PRESIDENT Nelson Rockefeller seems bewildered by the furor set off by his debut as a foreign policy spokesman for the Ford Administration.

"He was only trying to help," explained a staff member who reported that a stream of angry letters and telephone calls followed Rockefeller's precipitate intervention in the debate over additional funds for South Vietnam.

Rockefeller surely did not help himself. Mostly he set off questions as to where he has been for the last 10 years. Was he sleeping while Hubert Humphrey, another Vice President who tried to sell Vietnam, lost the White House for his pains?

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ROCKEFELLER did not help his dear friend, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who is sulkily peddling "partnership" with Congress these days. Rockefeller's searing suggestion that Congress would have blood on its hands if the Communists take over South Vietnam and a million people are liquidated was not calculated to win hearts and minds on Capitol Hill.

He did not assist his master, Gerald Ford. Rockefeller's fiery leap backward in the blood-bath-and-scapegoat rhetoric of the 1960s caused Mr. Ford, through his press secretary, to disengage and say he wouldn't blame Congress.

Nor did Rockefeller visibly assist the cause he thought he was serving. Congress is reflecting the weariness and disgust of its constituency in its resistance to voting \$300 million more for "light at the end of the tunnel" in Vietnam. With food stamps going up and social services going down, the country is saying no.

Rockefeller's napalm rhetoric came after 10 years of virtual silence on the subject. If he had any disagreement with the policies of Lyndon Johnson or Richard Nixon during the years while the casualty lists were coming in and the streets were choked with protest, he kept them to himself.

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NO ONE suspects that Rockefeller did any violence to his own deep convictions by his inflammatory remarks on Vietnam. From all that can be learned, he is an old-fashioned cold warrior.

It is not asked of Rockefeller, as it was of Spiro Agnew, when he began hurling thunderbolts, if the President put him up to it. Maybe Rockefeller divined in either Kissinger or in Mr. Ford a desire for a point man who would lay it on the line in the old way.

Mr. Ford's views on Vietnam have never changed. Through it all, he has maintained a stubborn hope that the Saigon regime could "hack it," as Richard Nixon used to say.