

# Guardsmen Overreacted, Agnew Says

United Press

Washington

Vice President Spiro Agnew said last night that Ohio National Guardsmen "overreacted" and may in a sense have been guilty of murder in the fatal shooting of four students at Kent State University.

A few hours after President Nixon assured college presidents that Administration officials would mute hostile comments about college students, Agnew appeared on the taping of a television show with David Frost in Los Angeles.

Under questioning by Frost, Agnew said he had great sorrow over the tragedy in Ohio but he said he felt the Guardsmen, many of them no older than the students, acted in the heat of anger.

The program is to be aired next Wednesday night.

Agnew said he felt there would have been no shooting had not militants hurled rocks and attacked the Guardsmen.

Frost pursued the question by asking whether there might not have been any demonstration had not students been upset over the movement of U.S. troops into Cambodia. Agnew replied that was possible but suggested certain elements were ready to riot over almost

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anything, including the length of haircuts.

Agnew was asked whether Guardsmen might not be held responsible for "murder" if it was established that no shots were fired at them first.

"Yes, but not first degree," Agnew said. "There was no premeditation but apparently an overreaction in the heat of anger."

Agnew's tone and manner were subdued throughout the 90-minute taping. The usual public audience was barred from the studio during the program.

## HICKEL

The Vice President said that it is his heartfelt opinion that "with the young people today rests the hope of the Nation."

Frost asked him about Interior Secretary Walter Hickel's letter to President Nixon suggesting that Agnew's speeches had contributed to a lack of communication between the younger people and the Administration.

Agnew said he did not believe his "old friend" Hickel, had read his speeches completely.

The Vice President said the opinions of younger people are being heard.

"But the fact that they are heard does not necessarily mean they must be heeded," he said.

## BUM

Frost asked Agnew about Mr. Nixon's use of the word "bum" in describing some college militants. The Vice President said Mr. Nixon used that phrase after learning that the life of a professor studying at Stanford University had been destroyed senselessly.

"I think his phrase was a little mild," Agnew said.

Frost asked Agnew about a statement that 200 million people were not qualified to "quarterback" the government.

"I think they have the right to sit in the stands and let their desires be known" Agnew said. "They have the right to offer advice, to criticize, to suggest but they don't have the right to quarterback officials a few months after they have been elected and ask them to change their minds."