

Agnew Denies That Nixon Is Growing More Liberal

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WASHINGTON, July 22—According to Vice President Agnew, the Nixon Administration has not liberalized its political outlook and does not plan to.

In an interview yesterday in his office, the Vice President discounted speculation about a philosophic change of heart in the White House. He described such interpretations as "purely contrived."

There is "no shift to the left" under way, Mr. Agnew said, nor has President Nixon been induced by liberal advisers to modify his approach to school desegregation and other sensitive issues.

"The President has been around a long time," said the Vice President. "He has his own ideas. He is not swayed by advisers of any kind. He's been around the track many times and he knows what he wants."

The Vice President's comments come after a string of Administration decisions that had been interpreted—by liberals and conservatives alike—as a moderation of Mr. Nixon's previous policies.

Disturbed Thurmond

Liberals, like Senator Walter F. Mondale, Democrat of Minnesota, and Senator Birch Bayh, Democrat of Indiana, had for weeks been criticizing the Administration and calling for a series of stronger desegregation enforcement actions.

In a period of two weeks, the Administration has declared it will strip private schools of their tax exemptions unless they renounce racial discrimination; it has filed suits to compel Deep South school districts to desegregate classes by September, and it has announced that it will send about 100 Federal lawyers and education specialists into the South to assist in bringing compliance with the court orders to desegregate.

The actions prompted Senator Strom Thurmond, the South Carolina Republican who has been Mr. Nixon's principal political link with the South, to warn the President that "such unreasonable policies" could cost him the 1972 election.

Mr. Agnew said in the interview that the White House was not "making efforts to create an attitude of false compassion." He said the Administration was mindful of and concerned about the problems of minorities, but he asserted that it had not modified its approach to them.

Question of Advisers

Coupled with the President's pledge, at a news conference Monday, that the Justice Department lawyers would not be "vigilante squads," the Vice President's remarks served to create the impression that the White House, which has never admitted to a "Southern strategy," nonetheless did not want to be accused of backing away from one.

Senator Thurmond has since praised the President both for his "vigilante squad" statement and for the rapid granting of tax exemptions to six private schools that have pledged open admissions.

The Senator said he had not broken with the Administration, but he elaborated on the criticism he made in his Senate speech that "liberal advisers around the President are misleading him."

In subsequent remarks, he specified Robert H. Finch, former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, and Jerris Leonard, civil rights chief of the Justice Department.

But Mr. Agnew said that recent Cabinet shuffles that have placed at the President's side such Administration moderates as Robert H. Finch as a counselor and George P. Shultz as Director of Management and Budget would not affect Mr. Nixon's judgment on issues.

Advisers can help to sharpen various viewpoints on the issues, said the Vice President, but they do not change Mr. Nixon's basic philosophy. "He's

pretty crystallized on those things," Mr. Agnew said.

He added that, as a matter of history, no man gets to be President by "vacillating or being easily affected" by external philosophic pressures. "This President is no different," the Vice President said.

New Panel Formed

For example, he said, if Mr. Finch and Bryce N. Harlow, a more conservative Presidential counselor, staked out opposing positions, neither would have greater influence on Mr. Nixon because "he's going to make up his own mind."

Mr. Agnew serves as chairman of the Cabinet Committee

on Education. Robert C. Mardian, its staff director, today disclosed the format of a new interagency subcommittee to deal with Administration responses to potential desegregation problems.

These range, he said, from what to do if violence occurs to how to respond to white flight from newly desegregated school districts.

The new subcommittee, composed of representatives from the Department of Justice, H.E.W. and possibly the Office of Economic Opportunity,

will hold its first meeting Monday.

The Cabinet committee, meanwhile is working to establish biracial advisory committees of influential citizens in nine Southern states. The first has been formed in Mississippi. The second, from South Carolina, is scheduled to meet with President Nixon tomorrow.

Committees also are being established in Georgia, North Carolina, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, Florida and Texas. They are intended to provide local leadership during this fall's school transition, Mr. Mardian said.