



Associated Press

WELCOMED AT PALACE IN ETHIOPIA: Vice President Agnew being greeted by Emperor Haile Selassie on Saturday. Mr. Agnew journeys to Kenya and the Congo today.

Agnew Finds Foreign Doubts on U.S.

By ROBERT B. SEMPLER JR.

Special to The New York Times

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, July 11—Vice President Agnew asserted today that the leaders he had met on his tour have said, without exception, they felt that America's status as a world leader had been seriously challenged by the publication of confidential Government documents and by what the leaders described as a growing isolationist spirit in Congress.

Speaking to reporters in his hotel here, Mr. Agnew described the leaders as "appalled by the idea that a private businessman—namely, the editor of a newspaper—can take it upon himself to declassify secret government information."

Mr. Agnew, about halfway through his 10-nation goodwill mission, has conferred with the heads of state and other influential officials in South Korea, Singapore, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia.

He said that the men to whom he had talked in the countries had expressed fears about what they called a "retreat from responsibility" by the United States, and that some of them had cited the defeat in Congress of the supersonic transport project as an example.

"They do not see," he said,

"how a great country—a technological giant—can continue to be great if it turns its back on its responsibilities." The Vice President implied that he agreed wholly with the sentiments of the leaders.

All of the countries Mr. Agnew has visited have a considerable stake in continued United States military or economic assistance or—in Singapore's case a continued American presence in Southeast Asia—and none has a lengthy tradition of press freedom.

The Vice President himself said that most of the countries he has visited "are very strong about things like military preparedness," and are acutely sensitive to "Communist expansion."

Mr. Agnew's comments came during a briefing designed in part to talk about the substance of his trip which—like a similar briefing in Singapore early this week—turned quickly to a discussion of some of the Vice President's complaints about politics and the press in America.

'A Little Jumpy'

Mr. Agnew apologized for not being able to supply newsmen with more detail about his discussions so far, but he said the leaders he had conferred with were "a little jumpy about the United States" since the publication of the Pentagon

papers, and had asked him not to divulge the contents of the conversations.

He said he did not believe that they had been inhibited from talking to him, however, and he also insisted that they did not blame the Nixon Administration for what they saw as a "wave of retreat from responsibility" in the United States. He said they fully understood that under the Nixon doctrine the President had no intention of keeping troops "everywhere in the world," but that they nevertheless fully expected the United States to help them to resist aggression through money and arms.

On other points, Mr. Agnew said he had been encouraged by what he termed the moderate attitudes expressed by leaders in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and said he had found optimism in both places that a fair Middle East settlement could be achieved. He also said he had received several "constructive and specific suggestions" from the Saudis on how the United States could play a more effective role in achieving such a settlement. He said he could not disclose what they were.

Conferences and Lunches

Mr. Agnew, whose activities so far have consisted mainly of conferences, lunches and dinners, was asked why he had not spent more of his time meeting the people and visiting local projects. The question had been put frequently to Victor Gold, the Vice President's press secretary.

Mr. Agnew replied that the meetings, which he described as "quite substantive," required a great deal of preparation, and that he had to absorb a lot of "mechanical things" and rules of protocol so that he could carry out the ceremonial aspects of his journey without mishap.