

# President Is Telling Aides to Defend Agnew's Performance

SEP 8 1971

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7—President Nixon is admonishing members of his Administration and party to speak out in defense of Vice President Agnew's performance in office. The day after he announced his new economic policy in a nationwide telecast, the President startled some sub-Cabinet officials who were gathered at the State Department for a private briefing on the policy, by grasping the Vice President's arm and raising it in the air—a gesture identical to the one Mr. Nixon made at the 1968 Republican convention. In public, Mr. Nixon's praise of Mr. Agnew has

He's got a tough job and he's doing it well. He's been attacked and maligned unfairly."

Officials who are leaking details of the two incidents are quick to say that the incidents do not represent a guarantee that Mr. Agnew will be the President's running mate again next year. There is one school of thought that the White House is merely trying to reassure conservative Republicans, as his policies appear to be moving leftward on China and the economy, that the President is not unmindful of their support.

One group of right-wing Republicans, calling itself "Americans for Agnew," is petitioning conservative campaign contributors to let the White House know "we will not accept the elimination of Spiro Agnew from the G.O.P. ticket in 1972." One member of the group is Lee Edwards, who was the deputy public relations director for the party's national committee in 1964 and 1965.

One member said the group would not accept Secretary of the Treasury John B. Connally, a Texas Democrat, as a replacement for Mr. Agnew on the Republican ticket.

At the sub-Cabinet briefing on the economic measures, Mr. Agnew reportedly rose to commend Mr. Connally on his "masterful handling" of questions that morning at a televised news conference.

Mr. Agnew added that he was referring "especially to the questions, some pertinent and some not so pertinent, concerning inflation and unemployment—specifically, the inflation of the egos of certain economic prophets and the much-discussed possible unemployment of the Vice President." The President beamed.

The President's economic turnabout has led indirectly to a detente between George Meany, president of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, and one of the labor leader's least favorite liberal Democrats, Senator George McGovern of South Dakota.

Mr. McGovern was one of the earliest, and harshest critics of the new economic policy and his jabs at Mr.

Nixon were viewed favorably at Mr. Meany's headquarters a block from the White House. When Senator McGovern asked for an appointment on Thursday to tell Mr. Meany he would back the labor leader's opposition to the President's program, the appointment was quickly granted.

The Senator expected Mr. Meany to be resentful of Mr. McGovern's vote several

years ago against repeal of Section 14-b of the Taft-Hartley Law, which permits states to prohibit compulsory union shops. Instead, Mr. Meany was still upset that the Senator had denounced him in 1963 as an opponent of President Kennedy's sale of surplus wheat to Iron Curtain countries.

In fact, Mr. Meany said, he was in favor of the wheat sale. Senator McGovern, who

## in Office

has had scant labor backing in his bid for the Democratic Presidential nomination, apologized.

Aside to those wondering how far the President's desire to curtail the flood of Japanese imports into the United States might go: The White House press office uses black, felt-tip marking pens that say "Made in Japan."



Associated Press

### Vice President Agnew

been more restrained. When the Vice President returned in July from a month-long tour of the world amid reports that he had been kept out of the way during negotiations on Mr. Nixon's diplomatic initiative toward China, the President said only, "Welcome back. You did a fine job."

But at a private meeting on Aug. 9 with officials of the Republican National Committee, Mr. Nixon urged the officials: "Support the Vice President. Do what you can to help the Vice President."