

White House Conciliatory On Protests and the Press

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Rallies Called Peaceful

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The White House reaffirmed today President Nixon's intention to seek peace in accordance with his own plan, but took a more conciliatory attitude than some Administration officials have taken toward protesters and the press.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, said it was "generally the White House view" that mass demonstrations by Vietnam policy critics last week were "generally peaceful"—a view that clashed with the opinion of Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

Mr. Ziegler also declared that the Administration has "absolutely no desire" to censor the news. At the same time, he defended Vice President Agnew's speech criticizing the television networks and remarks by Herbert G. Klein, Mr. Nixon's Director of Communications, broadening the cri-

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Nat'l Commission on
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Prevention of Violence,
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ticism to include all news media.

Mr. Agnew, in a speech Thursday in Des Moines, Iowa, accused the networks of a selective and biased presentation of news, and yesterday Mr. Klein said all news media needed to re-examine their coverage.

The point both Mr. Agnew and Mr. Klein sought to make, said Mr. Ziegler, was that the media should "examine themselves."

The Question Remains

As the Administration settled back into its normal routine following the march by some 250,000 protesters on Saturday. The question remained, as Mr. Ziegler stated it, "how to achieve peace."

He said Mr. Nixon would follow the plan he outlined Nov. 3 in a nationwide television address. In that address the President rejected a "precipitate withdrawal" from Vietnam and spoke of seeking a measured pace of disengagement.

"With the belief that the American people support him, the President is determined to seek a just and lasting peace," said Mr. Ziegler. "He could not be more totally committed to achieving it."

Nevertheless, the debate continued in the capital about both the technique of the demonstrators in seeking to alter the President's view and the criticism of the news media being issued by Administration leaders.

Mr. Mitchell issued a statement yesterday, contending that "the planned demonstrations were marred by such extensive physical injury, property damage and street confrontations that I do not believe that—over-all—the gathering here can be characterized as peaceful."

Mr. Ziegler's comments today — that there were some "glaring examples" of violence but that the two major events sponsored by the committee were "generally peaceful"—ran counter to the tone of the Attorney General's statement. The two events were the 40-hour candlelight march past the White House and the mass march and rally here Saturday.

The President's press spokesman declined to say whether Mr. Nixon agreed with Mr. Mitchell, but he said that his

own comments reflected "the White House view."

Similarly, Mr. Ziegler's approach toward the mushrooming controversy over the Vice President's attack on television news commentators reflected a more moderate stance.

"There is absolutely no intention on the part of Herb or the Vice President to suggest there should be censorship or there should be Government intervention in this," said Mr. Ziegler.

Former Vice President Humphrey, however, saw in Mr. Agnew's speech last Thursday and in the complaints later voiced by Mr. Klein and Mr. Mitchell "a deliberate and calculated" attempt to suppress dissent.

Commissioner Nicholas Johnson of the Federal Communications Commission, who has voiced concern in the past about what he views as growing political power of TV network executives, criticized Mr. Agnew today for having "frightened network executives and newsmen in ways that may cause serious and permanent harm to independent journalism and free speech in America."

Mr. Ziegler denied reports published in Time magazine that the President had ordered the Vice President to make the speech last week, although he confirmed that one of the President's speech writers, Patrick J. Buchanan, "could have contributed some thoughts and ideas" to the speech.

In the speech, Mr. Agnew criticized television commentators for their analyses of the President's Nov. 3 address.

Mr. Ziegler said that Mr. Buchanan, a conservative who wrote some of Mr. Nixon's

most outspoken "law and order" speeches during the 1968 campaign, "may have had, and I think did have, some thoughts regarding this" and could have passed them on to the Vice President's staff.

Questions from reporters about Mr. Nixon's own views on the Vice President's speech were brushed aside by Mr. Ziegler. At one point he flatly refused to ask Mr. Nixon for his comments.

Commissioner Johnson said, in a speech at the University of Iowa, that Americans were in Mr. Agnew's debt for bringing the issues and tactics of television news coverage into the open.

He expressed concern, however, that Mr. Agnew and other Administration officials were "demanding more favorable coverage."

The impression that the Government, which controls issuance of television licenses, is threatening the networks "at least appears worse," said Mr. Johnson, "when President Nixon selects as F.C.C. chairman the former head of the Republican National Committee, who is scarcely on the job before obtaining transcripts of televised comments of which the President disapproves."

Dean Burch, sworn in Oct. 31 as Mr. Nixon's appointee to head the commission, telephoned the three networks Nov. 5 to ask for transcripts of commentaries on the President's Vietnam policy speech.

The Senate Republican whip, Robert P. Griffin of Michigan said in Detroit today that television news coverage gives "a distorted picture of what's going on in Washington."