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## Agnew Says Press Has Helped Hanoi

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Singapore

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew renewed his criticism of the national news media yesterday, charging them with unintentionally assisting the North Vietnamese by some aspects of their coverage of the war in Indochina.

Agnew's unusually sharp words came during a conversation here with a group of newsmen he invited to his suite to explain the purpose of his ten-nation goodwill trip.

Apparently responding to newspaper and magazine articles that questioned the diplomatic value of his three-week mission, Agnew described his voyage as more than a routine goodwill trip. He said it was partly an effort to reassure friendly nations, particularly in Asia and around the Mediterranean, that the United States intends to remain a world power despite some "isolationist" voices in Washington.

### VIETNAM

Turning to Vietnam, the Vice President said he believed that the prospects for the survival of the South Vietnamese government were "very good," but he said that one major variable was the patience of the American people. This patience, he said, might be eroded by narrow or incomplete reporting of Communist successes on the battlefield during the next few crucial months.

The North Vietnamese, he

said, might easily launch a "high-risk, high-casualty effort" that "will unquestionably — if it's successful, regardless of the North Vietnamese casualties — be played heavily in the United States as a failure of the Vietnamization program."

Agnew said he believed that Allied forces in Vietnam could prevent a successful enemy attack "in a military sense," but he warned that the enemy might achieve a "public relations coup" just the same because "so many of our people in the national media are too ready to assist the North Vietnamese by their overemphasis on what's taking place."

"I don't think they mean to assist them," the vice president went on, "but we've

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gone through this terrible 'introspective,' almost masochistic twinge of conscience in our country regarding the Vietnam war where we look with favor on anything good that happens to the enemy."

### PAPERS

The propriety of publishing government documents was raised by Agnew himself when he was asked what he thought of the Singapore government's closing two papers and jailing the editors of a third for criticizing the regime of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

Agnew said that criticism of government was "healthy" and that he believed, "very firmly in a free press."

However, he said, the "blatant publication" of secret material was another matter entirely. Without directly mentioning the publication of the Pentagon study on U.S. involvement in Vietnam, Agnew said:

"I don't think it's up to any newspaper principal or any private citizen who is really totally unbriefed on many of the matters under consideration to take it upon himself to decide that to publish that in-

formation would not harm the national interests. I don't see how he's in a position to make that judgment, and I think, moreover, that he would be tempted to find in favor of publication because he is in fact involved as a commercial enterprise which would benefit from the publication of that information in a commercial sense."

### OBJECTIVES

In his review of the objectives of his tour, Agnew conceded that there were no serious bilateral issues outstanding with any nation on his itinerary, but that many of them were nervous about the implications of the Nixon doctrine and about the "isolationist attitude represented by some voices in our Congress."

Part of the misunderstanding among foreign leaders about Mr. Nixon's true objectives arose, Agnew suggested, from the prominence given "isolationist" voices by the news media, which he also accused of reporting incompletely to the American public Mr. Nixon's foreign policy.

This policy, the Vice President insisted, included a firm commitment to maintain the present treaty relationships of the United States.

Agnew said that all the Asian leaders he had ever spoken with believed "in the domino theory, given the absence of powerful (countervailing) forces." He agreed that the United States could no longer act as the world's "policeman," but said that it would continue to furnish economic and military aid.