

Watergate Worry Denied by Agnew

10/22/72
By Stephen Green

Washington Post Staff Writer

CHICAGO, Oct. 21 — Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, at a press conference here today, said he has a clear conscience and is not bothered by any question of political morality raised by the Watergate bugging case.

Later, while flying in his campaign plane to Pittsburgh, Agnew said he feared what affect a Washington Post article on the use of drugs might have on his 17-year-old daughter, Kim.

At his first full-fledged press conference since Oct. 14, Agnew initially tried to brush off questions about the bugging of Democratic Party headquarters and other reports of Republican political espionage.

"... As far as my knowledge of the Watergate is concerned, you gentlemen have thoroughly mined that. There is no more political gold to be mined and my position is that you should abandon that shaft," the Vice President told newsmen.

The questions, however, continued, and Agnew was asked whether he, personally, was bothered by problems of political morality raised by the Watergate case.

"I'm not bothered by them because I know they don't extend into the White House and I know it doesn't affect my conscience at all," he replied.

Agnew explained that he knows the White House was not involved "because an investigation has been made by the President and I have confidence he is telling the truth."

After his press conference here, Agnew flew to Pittsburgh, where he is scheduled to end four days of campaigning in a speech to a dinner of the boiler makers' union.

En route, he walked up to reporters with a partial copy of an article by Dr. Andrew Weil in the Oct. 1 editions of The Washington Post.

Pointing to a paragraph which said withdrawal from heroin is never fatal, while withdrawal from alcohol and

barbituates can result in death, Agnew stated:

"I have a 17-year-old daughter. I wonder what goes through her mind when she reads, heroin is no more harmful than alcohol."

Two days ago, Agnew criticized The Post for printing the article, without also publishing contravening opinion at the same time.

Defending America

During his four-day campaigning tour, Agnew's central theme has been to defend America as a land of opportunity, while attacking Sen. George S. McGovern, the Democratic presidential candidate, for criticizing the condition of the country.

"Maybe this country as it is now doesn't seem noble to him (McGovern) but to me and to you and to scores of millions of Americans, it is the finest nation on earth," Agnew said in Brigeport, Conn., on Thursday.

In New York Thursday night, he carried this theme even further to say that the goodness and greatness of this country, as he envisions it, should be used to intervene in the affairs of other nations.

"... Let us never turn away from our responsibilities to help the weak to defend themselves... let us keep the United States what it is now and what it always has been..." Agnew stated.

At the press conference today, Agnew said he doesn't "see that much wrong with American society."

Agnew compared his and McGovern's styles to a television repairman (McGovern) who would "rip the guts out of a set" and another repairman (Agnew) who would only "adjust the fine tuning."