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SPEED ON INQUIRY
URGED BY AGNEW

He Wants the Watergate Facts Brought Into Open to Get Case 'Over With'

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 Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 30— Vice President Agnew said today that the facts in the Watergate conspiracy case should be "dredged" into the open quickly so that the nation, and the Republican Party, could "get it over with."

He expressed renewed faith that the outcome would demonstrate that President Nixon "is untouched by these matters as far as any direct involvement is concerned."

But he said in an hour-long conversation in his office at the White House complex that he had no more knowledge about the truth of the Watergate affair than had the average reader of newspaper accounts or viewer of the Senate's televised hearings.

Mr. Agnew said that he had made no effort to go "beyond what the general public knows" about the Watergate case, because the investigators had enough to do without brief-

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ing him on it and he had "no direct responsibility to act on any of these matters" under investigation.

"It would be a mere point of satisfying my own curiosity" he said, "and that can wait just as everyone else's can."

As the Vice President sipped coffee and answered questions in his quiet suite in the Executive Office Building, he appeared to tread gently along a narrow line separating loyalty to President Nixon and consideration of his and his party's political futures.

"There's no matter of more important political sensitivity than Watergate, regardless of

what the Gallup poll says," Mr. Agnew said, disputing the poll's finding earlier this month that inflation and crime ranked ahead of the Watergate case as a matter of concern among voters.

He renewed his opposition to the televised Senate hearings on the Watergate conspiracy, saying that they should be put off until after Federal grand juries and the courts had explored the possibility of criminal charges. But he said that he agreed with Senator Herman E. Talmadge of Georgia, one of the Democrats on the Senate investigating committee, that if the hearings continued, they should immediately focus on the highest level of culpability in the White House.

"I feel like Senator Talmadge does," the Vice President said. "I'd like to see it all get dredged and get it over with."

Stand on Wiretapping

Mr. Agnew voiced approval of domestic wiretapping for national security purposes as long as it involved "matters vital as the President determines to the protection of our country."

But he asserted, "One of the things I would never do is tap another person's conversation, regardless of how advantageous it might be to me individually."

He endorsed the 4,000-word statement issued last week by the President: "His definitive statement," Mr. Agnew called it—to explain that the White

House had undertaken a series of domestic surveillance activities to safeguard Government secrets.

But the Vice President declined to say "until all the facts are developed" whether he was personally comfortable with the suggestion, implicit in Mr. Nixon's explanation, that White House subordinates had gone overboard in their zeal to plug leaks of information about sensitive diplomatic initiatives.

Asked for his views on why it took President Nixon until last week to offer a specific explanation, Mr. Agnew replied:

"I'm confident that he agonized a great amount over these matters, and what might have gone wrong with important diplomatic discussions and policy implementations that were in the process had he not been zealously guarded in protecting the secrecy of these matters."

April Reports Recalled

"I'm not in a position to insert myself on top of the President in judging whether he was as diligent as he should have been in getting out as much information as he should. But I have enough confidence in him individually to believe that he moved as quickly as he could within his analysis of what the consequences would be to the United States."

Reports circulated here last month that Mr. Agnew was

being urged by his political advisers to make a public statement dissociating himself from the Watergate case as a means of heading off any harmful impact to his prospects as a Presidential contender in 1976.

The Vice President instead read a 314-word statement on April 25 reaffirming "full confidence" in President Nixon and pledging to wait until the facts had been brought out before commenting publicly on the Watergate matter.

He reiterated today his refusal to discuss his own political plans at least until after the Congressional elections of 1974. Further, he underscored his reluctance to make any definitive comment on the Watergate case for the present, saying:

"There's so much speculation, so many remarks from undisclosed sources and so many statements by people who are already personally implicated who are rushing to save their own hides that this doesn't seem to be the proper time to comment."

Nonetheless, the ice President openly expressed concern that Watergate might damage Republican candidates if the issue was not clarified expeditiously.

The public, he said, has difficulty separating "what has been proved from what is simply alleged, and as long as you have that in a terribly complicated thing that this has become, swirling around in the public consciousness, it has to be politically damaging."

"So the best thing that can happen is for it to get investigated and over with as rapidly as possible," he added.

He said that he had "full confidence" that Archibald Cox, the special Watergate prosecutor appointed by the new Attorney General, Elliot L. Richardson, would take the same attitude "and will move diligently" to complete his investigation.

Mr. Agnew underscored his faith in Mr. Nixon by saying that he had not detected any "fear for the integrity of the Administration" among its constituents.

"The Administration is, by most analysis, the President," he said, "and the President is untouched by these matters as far as any direct involvement is concerned."