

Agnew's Decision On Watergate

Washington

Vice President Spiro Agnew has rejected the advice of some supporters that he preserve an "Agnew option" for the presidency by quietly disassociating himself from President Nixon on the Watergate scandal.

Instead of refusing to become the "point man" for the President — as Agnew has been urged to do by some of his conservative supporters — the Vice President will make a major speech today, defending Mr. Nixon and criticizing the conduct of the Senate committee that is investigating Watergate.

The forum chosen by Ag-

new for the speech is the National Association of Attorneys General, which is meeting in St. Louis. It is an audience considered receptive to the position that allegations of guilt or innocence should be proven in court prior to opinions formed by televised nationwide hearings.

"The Vice President has every confidence in the President," said J. Marsh Thompson, Agnew's press secretary. "He is convinced that the courts are the proper place to try the defendants, not the committee room, and that there are all kinds of dangers from continued public hearings. He is increasingly distressed about it."

Thompson made his comment in response to questions about whether Agnew had decided to follow the counsel of those who want him to preserve his own presidential possibilities by keeping silent.

An article in the June 2 issue of Human Events, an ultraconservative Washington publication, urged that Agnew model himself after Calvin Coolidge, who as vice president remained silent as President Warren Harding became steadily implicated in the Teapot Dome scandal. This silence helped make Coolidge the popular choice of Republicans distressed by the scandal.

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