

Text of Agnew's Televised Statement on Investigation

AUG 23 1973

Following is a statement by Vice President Agnew on reports of developments in an investigation of the Vice President:

On Wednesday, August 1, 1973, my attorney received a letter from George Beall, United States Attorney in Maryland, advising that his office was conducting an investigation of allegations concerning possible violations by me and others of certain federal criminal statutes. Properly, I made every effort to protect the traditional privacy of such an investigation.

Then, on Monday, August 6, 1973, I learned that some of Tuesday's newspapers would carry stories revealing that the investigation was underway and disclosing that the letter had been sent to me. At that point, I

issued a statement acknowledging I had been informed of the investigation, declaring my innocence of any wrongdoing, and announcing I would make no further comment until the investigation had been completed.

I had every right to expect that a similar effort to prevent publicity would be made by the Attorney General and Mr. Beall and their respective staffs in Washington and Baltimore. That, of course, was their legal duty.

Therefore, I was shocked during the course of the next thirty-six hours to discover that the news media were reporting numerous details concerning the investigation, detailed allegations that had to be coming from people who were actually participating in the investigation. I, therefore, called a

press conference on Wednesday, August 8, 1973, to set the record straight.

Since then, the leaks have continued unabated. I regret to say that it has become clear that the "sources close to the investigation" so frequently quoted were indeed just that — persons involved in the investigatory process. A national news magazine account entitled "Heading Toward an Indictment?" published yesterday and picked up by the wire services freely quotes unnamed Justice Department officials. I can only assume from this account that some Justice Department officials have decided to indict me in the press whether or not the evidence supports their position. This is a clear and outrageous effort to influence the outcome of possible

grand jury deliberations. And so, notwithstanding my initial decision not to comment, I have had to respond publicly to these continuing charges.

Any person who has been in politics and government for many years is aware of the personal and political hazards of unsubstantiated charges, rumors, innuendo and speculation. I have been subjected to these before, and I am accustomed to fighting this kind of battle. What I find intolerable, however, is the impact which this smear publicity may have on the rights of others—particularly private citizens—who have been swept into this highly publicized investigation.

On Sunday, the Attorney General made a nationally televised denial that any of the leaks has come from his

department. Mr. Richardson also indicated he would investigate any suggestion that his Department has been a source of these leaks.

I have communicated with the Attorney General today and have asked that he fulfill that promise and pursue such an investigation vigorously. I hope that the national news media will also urge Mr. Richardson and the Justice Department to conduct such an investigation diligently, wherever it may lead, and to use all available investigatory tools to compel sworn testimony to reveal the identity of "unnamed Justice Department officials" and "sources close to the investigation."

I have not called you to this meeting for the purpose of criticizing the news media. I cannot fault you for publishing information

given you by informants within the Department of Justice. The blame must rest with those who give this information to the press and who do so with an obvious motive of interfering with the independent investigatory process of the grand jury. I have called this meeting to advise you of the request I have made of the Attorney General and to say again to the American people that I will fight to prove my innocence, and that I intend to remain in the high office to which I have been twice elected.

As I said before, I have nothing to hide. I have made all requested records available to the prosecutors, and have offered to meet with them and answer any questions they may have.

According to this morning's paper, Mr. Beall says

that he is not sure whether he even wishes to question me. I suppose that, if he wants to hear only one side of the story, that is up to him. I will say only that it seems to me a very strange way to run an investigation.

Mr. Beall is quoted as saying that I have sought a meeting because it would be desirable from my standpoint. His statement is not wholly accurate. It is true that I would like to meet with Mr. Beall and his staff—and I would like them to hear the truth. But before I

made my suggestion to Mr. Beall, my lawyers had been notified by the Department of Justice that "the way is open for the Vice President to talk to the prosecutors if he wishes." I do wish. I hope that the way remains open.

It is through proper investigation of all the facts that the truth will emerge—not through trial by headline nor by hearing only part of the story.

I am confident that the orderly processes of justice will result in my complete vindication.