

Agnew Determined To Clear Name, Has No '76 Hopes

Vice President Agnew flew to California yesterday for a weekend respite from his legal battles, after telling an interviewer he will fight to clear his name, despite the realization that his 1976 presidential hopes are "all over."

And he got a boost yesterday when a wealthy contributor to the 1968 Nixon-Agnew campaigns, Chicago insurance executive W. Clement Stone, announced that he and two prominent politicians were setting up an Agnew defense fund to help defray the Vice President's legal expenses.

Joining him as trustees of the fund, Stone said, are Sen. Barry M. Goldwater (R-Ariz.) and Warren E. Hearnes, a Democrat who retired last year after two terms as governor of Missouri.

Agnew flew cross-country to the Palm Springs home

of his friend, entertainer Frank Sinatra, for a vacation from the pressures of his battle against possible bribery and kickback charges under investigation by a federal grand jury in Baltimore.

Yesterday, The New York Times' vice president and Washington columnist, James Reston, reported that Agnew has determined to remain in his position as Vice President and to seek vindication, even if he is indicted by the grand jury.

Reston told the Associated Press he was not "free to identify the forum" in which he learned of Agnew's views, but his report included numerous direct quotations, leaving the impression that he had interviewed the Vice President.

Reston said that Agnew had lost confidence in the Justice Department because of repeated leaks of evidence against him and had turned to the House for a fair hearing.

Agnew also indicated that the House would be more "sophisticated" in judging the kickback allegations than would a jury of laymen, Reston said.

The account said that Agnew was not surprised that House Speaker Carl Albert had rejected his initial plea for a formal investigation but that he did not regard that answer as final and would renew his efforts to get a House hearing.

Agnew is critical of the Justice Department and particularly of Henry E. Petersen, the assistant attorney general in charge of the criminal division, Reston said. He is talking about an investigation of the sources of the leaks and says that if his suspicions are con-



Departing for California, Vice President Agnew greets Brig. Gen. C. J. Douglas Jr., a wing commander at Andrews AFB. Agnew ill stay at the home of Frank Sinatra.

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firmed, he is prepared to call publicly for the resignations of those responsible, Reston reported.

But, Reston said, Agnew is resigned to the fact that his reputation has been so badly damaged by the leaks that his chance of winning the presidency in 1976 is "all over."

Reston reported that Agnew "is not critical of President Nixon's handling of his case, but is less sure about members of the President's staff. He says that the Presi-

dent has been cordial and friendly and has never pressed him to resign."

As for his own mood, Agnew is quoted by Reston as saying that he was "boiling mad" when the charges first came to light, "then melancholic, frustrated and sleepless."

During this time, Reston said, Agnew "sought the counsel of friends" and "talked about all the options before him, and did mention resignation as one of them."

"But he says he never re-

ally considered resigning," Reston reported.

Agnew is concerned about the costs of his defense, Reston said, which may total as much as half-a-million dollars.

In Chicago, Stone, who was reported to have contributed \$5 million to the 1968 and 1972 GOP campaigns, said the purpose of the legal defense fund was to "insure that Mr. Agnew has the best possible counsel to defend himself and his constitutional office."