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Agnew Drops
WXP Post
Tough Stand,
Praises Nixon

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CHICAGO, Oct. 4—Vice President Agnew, backing away from a confrontation with the White House, tonight surprised a Republican fund-raising audience by omitting all mention of his own case and praising President Nixon for performing under the "most unbelievable pressures."

Agnew's speech to a \$125-a-plate dinner of the United Republican Fund repudiated the prediction of his own press secretary, J. Marsh Thomson, that the Vice President would give a "fighting speech" similar to the one he made last Saturday in Los Angeles.

On that occasion Agnew accused Assistant Attorney General Henry E. Petersen of "malicious and outrageous" news leaks that Agnew said violated his presumption of innocence. The Vice President ended that speech to a cheering crowd of Republican women with a pledge not to resign if indicted.

Mr. Nixon, at a news conference Wednesday, said that Agnew's decision not to quit was an "altogether proper one" but he defended Petersen against the charge of news leaks.

The statement by the President, although carefully worded, appeared to be a White House effort to avoid any further strain between Mr. Nixon and Vice President Agnew. In recent weeks Agnew aides have been openly critical of what they considered was an attempt by the White House to undercut the Vice President's position.

One Agnew aide said Wednesday after the press conference that the President's statement about Petersen "did not fill the bill" and hinted that Agnew himself would be critical of the statement in his Chicago speech.

Tonight, Agnew made no mention of Petersen or of the investigation by a federal grand jury in Maryland. The Vice President, who has not been charged with any crime, is under investigation for possible violation of conspiracy, bribery, tax fraud and extortion laws relating to kickback scandals while he was governor of Maryland or Baltimore County executive.

Agnew's only reference to his own case came when he

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added to a sentence which said that "the federal government is not the repository of all wisdom and understanding," these words: "no, not even the Department of Justice."

There was no warning that Agnew would discard the outspoken strategy he had adopted only six days ago. Some aides said as late as this afternoon that the Vice President was working on a text on the plane to Chicago that they expected would be a sequel to the Los Angeles speech.

Thomson, who had been predicting such a sequel all week, was left home at the last minute and did not make the trip. Aides said he was on "personal business."

The first hint that the Vice President had changed his strategy came from Agnew himself when he began his speech by saying:

"Tonight is not going to be an X-rated political show—it's just going to be PG. So if you have to go some place, go." A candle is only so long before it burns out."

The Vice President gave no explanation of these remarks. Some Agnew aides said they frankly didn't know why the strategy was changed.

Meanwhile, W. Clement Stone, the multimillionaire Republican fund-raiser who last week organized the Agnew defense fund, said that he was getting "a response in volume" from all over the country.

In an addition to his prepared text Agnew praised President Nixon and said that there is "no tougher job in the world."

"We have a great President," Agnew said. "We have a President who has certainly been made in the crucible of differences, differences which he could not envision . . ."

Agnew, Richardson

Attend Cabinet Meeting

Associated Press

Vice President Agnew attended a Cabinet meeting at the White House yesterday but a spokesman said there was no discussion during the 90-minute session of the Vice President's case.

Attorney General Elliott L. Richardson, whose Justice Department is presenting evidence to a Baltimore grand jury on allegations that Agnew took kickbacks and bribes, also was seated at the Cabinet ta-

ble. Gerald L. Warren, deputy White House secretary, said after the meeting that "the entire vice presidential matter did not come up." Rather, he said, President Nixon led a discussion of issues involving various departments and agencies.

Among them, Warren said, were congressional moves to cut back U.S. troop strength overseas by more than 100,000 men and the need for congressional action on administration legislation in the energy and transportation fields.



United Press International

Agnew shields eyes from TV lights at start of speech before the United Republican Fund dinner in Chicago.