

SF Examiner

# A week to remember

By William Randolph Hearst, Jr.

Editor-in-Chief, The Hearst Newspapers

NEW YORK — Important pages in history certainly were being written this week. In the Mideast—war, senseless and bloody war between the Arabs and the Israelis for the fourth time in 25 years. On our home-front—a new political crisis as the vice president of the United States abruptly resigns, an admitted criminal.



W. R. Hearst Jr.

Both of the big news developments have shocked the world. Both remain to be resolved as this is written. And both require difficult judgments made doubly difficult by fast-breaking new events.

Most important, by far, is the latest eruption of violence in the Mideast and the resultant threat of disruption in the precarious balance of world powers. Each day

—Turn to Page B2, Col. 7



Comment on the tragedy of Spiro T. Agnew is made with considerable sadness. As readers know, my last two columns evinced a sympathetic defense of this tall, courtly, imposing man who lectured us so eloquently on law and order. Now we learn he was a fraud.

It came as an almost unbelievable shock, his resignation and simultaneous plea of guilty to income tax evasion. Now we find that even while publicly proclaiming his innocence, while declaring he would not quit even if indicted, all the time he was maneuvering for a deal which would keep him out of jail.

A fantastic story — and a terribly tragic one. A man who aspired to be President of the United States, and possibly might have made it, suddenly stripped of his makeup and exposed as a common felon. It is still hard to believe, impossible to describe the letdown so many of us have felt.

There can be no condoning his guilt. What he did was in perfect accord with the popular image of a cheaply grafting politician and not the least of his disservice has been to reinforce that concept.

No, Spiro Agnew got what he deserved. Unlike others who think he should have gone to jail, my feeling is that merciful justice is being done. His world is in ruins, his troubles with the Internal Revenue Service just beginning. He will be suffering punishment indeed.

I think, though, we might give him this: in the end he took his medicine like a man. And there is good reason to believe that his decision to plead guilty was not entirely for the selfish purpose of escaping prison.

He declared in his letter to President Nixon that he had come to the conclusion that further fight in his own defense would result in a long and traumatic period of public indecision about its leadership. He said he believed it his clear duty to prevent such a situation.

President Nixon believed him. I believe him. There is no doubt Mr. Agnew could have stalled the charges against him almost indefinitely. And that is why, in spite of other sordid acts, he should be at least credited with a final act of honor and courage.

So now the process of installing a new vice president is under way. Wasting no time, Mr. Nixon on Friday night submitted the name of his own carefully-considered choice for the post — Rep. Gerald R. Ford.

Now it is Congress' turn to act. Its members should act with equal dispatch to confirm the President's selection. Throughout our history it has always been the prerogative of presidents to hand-pick the men they want to have standing by in the case of sudden emergency.