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# Agnew Says He Quit to Aid Nixon in Restoring Trust

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 15—Spiro T. Agnew told the nation tonight that he had resigned the Vice-Presidency to give President Nixon an opportunity to restore "unimpaired confidence and implicit trust" in the office he vacated.

The former Vice President, his eyes moist but his bearing composed, told a nationwide television audience that he was innocent of any wrongdoing but that he accepted a conviction of income tax evasion last week to spare the nation further agony.

He hailed President Nixon, declared that the nominee to be Vice President, Gerald R. Ford, was an "excellent choice," and declared that his experience had not diminished his confidence that American democracy "is working better than ever before."

Mr. Agnew charged that wit-

nesses who had contributed to building a Government case of tax fraud, bribery and extortion against him were "self-confessed bribe brokers" and said the readiness to believe their accusations within the Department of Justice was "not realistic."

He called for reforms in the political system to help the

*Text of the Agnew address is printed on Page 34.*

nation profit from what he called his "nightmare come true."

In the 19 minutes that he read from a prepared statement in front of the television cameras here, Mr. Agnew refrained from the bitter and blunt criticism of the Nixon Administration that he was said to have voiced privately yesterday.

According to a copyrighted article in a Tennessee newspaper, the former Vice President said that he had been forced to resign by pressure, as the article paraphrased it, "from the highest levels of the Nixon Ad-

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The New York Times  
**Former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew discussing his resignation in a nationwide television address from Washington.**



# Agnew Says He Quit to Help Nixon

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ministration." In Washington, that phrase is customarily translated to mean the President.

But Mr. Agnew said tonight that he wanted to pay "tribute" to the President for having shown "restraint and compassion" during months of the Government's investigation of the Vice President. He called published accounts of unfriendly or "vitriolic" meetings with the President "completely false."

Moreover, Mr. Agnew urged the nation to support his chosen successor, Mr. Ford, and the Nixon Administration. He asked that the nation fulfill a need "not for regret, which looks at the past, but for resolve that looks to the future."

The former Vice President appeared pale and a bit edgy, but toward the end of his remarks he managed a smile. He said that he would draw his inspiration from the comment of James A. Garfield on the death of President Lincoln:

"Fellow citizens, God reigns, and the Government in Washington still lives."

Mr. Agnew did not refute any of the specific detailed allegations lodged against him in a summary filed by the Department of Justice with the Federal Judge who sentenced Mr. Agnew last week to three years of unsupervised probation and fined him \$10,000.

## Not 'Enriched'

But he denied them as a whole, and he said that to portray him as the "initiator and gray eminence" of a scheme to rake funds from contractors in return for favors was "enough to provoke incredulous laughter." And he repeated his courtroom assertions that he never had "enriched myself in betrayal of my public trust."

He said that he had made the technical plea of no contest on a single charge of income tax evasion because, he said, the nation could not tolerate continued trauma.

His act, Mr. Agnew declared, was born of a desire to "still the raging storm."

He said that in an electronic age, "image becomes dominant, appearance supersedes reality" and thus the charges being

made against him in the press were "fatal to a man who must be ready at any moment to step into the Presidency."

Thus, he said, he ended the turmoil by stepping out of office and giving the President the opportunity of selecting a successor and restoring some measure of public trust.

As he began his remarks, he said that he did not wish "to spend these last moments with you in a paroxysm of bitterness." He declared toward the end of the address that "the resignation of a Vice President, for example, is insignificant compared with the death of a President." He observed that he would "take leave of you tonight, my friends," in the same spirit of Mr. Garfield's tribute to Mr. Lincoln and the Republic.

"The Government," Mr. Agnew said, "does live—it lives in the pages of our Constitution and in the hearts of our citizens, and there it will always be safe."

## First Time for Fee

The speech tonight was the first by Mr. Agnew since his resignation five days earlier, but it may well not be his last public defense of his political career. Associates said today that Mr. Agnew had received a number of speaking invitations and they speculated that he might fall back on his role as an orator—for the first time for a fee—as a livelihood for at least a while.

The former Vice President delivered the televised remarks from the Washington studios of the National Broadcasting Company, a short drive from his \$190,000 home in the Kenwood section of suburban Bethesda, Md.

In The Nashville Banner article, Mr. Agnew was not quoted directly, at his request. But the article attributed to him a declaration that he had been forced to resign and plead no contest to one charge of Federal income tax evasion.

Frank Van Der Linden, the author of the article and one of the few journalists who have had access to Mr. Agnew during his five years in the Nixon Administration, reported that Mr. Agnew had denied ever cheating on his Federal income tax returns.

According to the article, Mr. Agnew said he had been pressured into accepting conviction on the single charge of tax evasion in exchange for the dropping of all other charges — including extortion and bribery — being assembled against Mr. Agnew.

Mr. Agnew pleaded nolo contendere, or no contest, last Wednesday to the Government charge that he willfully evaded payment of taxes on \$29,500 of unreported income in 1967, when he was Governor of Maryland.

The plea, while technically not an admission of wrongdoing, was the equivalent in law of a guilty plea, as United States District Judge Walter E. Hoffman warned Mr. Agnew — who in turn stated that he understood that to be the case.

Moreover, Mr. Agnew read to the court a statement in which he said:

"I admit that I did receive payments during the year 1967 which were not expended for political purposes and that, therefore, these payments were income taxable to me in that year and that I so knew."

Sources close to Mr. Agnew's team of defense lawyers subsequently confided that the former Vice President had been prepared to resign since Sept. 13, the date that his lawyers began secret negotiations with the Department of Justice on the bargain that eventually was struck. The sources said that Mr. Agnew had insisted, however, that he be enabled to avoid a direct plea of guilty and that the Government agree to seek punishment that would not include imprisonment.

The arrangement that was settled on last week, with the active involvement of J. Fred Buzhardt Jr., President Nixon's special White House counsel on Watergate matters, left Mr. Agnew free to continue to assert his innocence of all but the single tax evasion charge.

The Justice Department, as a condition of the agreement, made public a 40-page document detailing what the Government said was evidence of a pattern of corruption involving Mr. Agnew's elective career as the Baltimore County Executive, Governor of Maryland and Vice President.