

Russo: nation still not purged

By Jane Owens

Americans must remain sceptical about the effects of the Senate Watergate investigations, Anthony Russo said Tuesday.

Addressing a crowd of about 600 in the Nebraska Union, the co-defendant in the Pentagon Papers trial said, "Watergate could have a sort of 'sunset' effect for democracy. As democracy descends, it appears to have a lot of bright colors.

"After Watergate is over, we might think we've purged the government of its corrupt elements, while actually we've only named a few scapegoats."

The Watergate affair "grew out of the Vietnam War," Russo asserted in a press conference earlier Tuesday.

"Vietnam is an issue we still can't escape," he said. "We've got to get to the bottom of what genocide is all about and why the U.S. employed it in Indochina."

The Pentagon Papers provide evidence "as good as that used in the Nuerenburg trials" of individual responsibility for U.S. war crimes committed during the Vietnam conflict, he contended.

The former RAND Corp. employe, who worked two years in Vietnam on a multimillion dollar research program, was charged with conspiracy, espionage and theft in connection with the 1971 release of the Pentagon Papers. He later was acquitted.

"If we're serious about democracy, we've got to be concerned about these war crimes (cited in the Pentagon Papers)," he said.

The nature of government policies always should be disclosed to the public, he said, although the manner in which diplomats implement policies might have to remain a secret for national security purposes.

"I'm certain there are other Pentagon Papers still to be found in the government," he said. "No doubt there are some real 'bombshells' in demand studies done for energy policies. If one had access to ITT files, he would probably find out some amazing things about Chile and getting rid of Allende."



Pentagon Papers co-defendant Anthony Russo

He suggested that citizens conduct public surveys to obtain feedback on government policies.

"Fighting cynicism (in government) depends upon the will each one of us has," he said. "You can't just sit back and watch the government happen. You have to put yourself into the picture."



Folk singer Pete Seeger performed a variety of new and traditional songs Tuesday in the Sheldon Art Gallery Sculpture Garden. Story on Page 6.



Photos by Gail Folda and Mike Theiler

