

Truman Asserts Freedom, Not Segregation, Issue

KANSAS CITY, May 20 (AP) — Former President Harry S. Truman said last night his opposition to Negro sit-down demonstrations in the South had been misconstrued as opposition to racial integration.

"What I had to say had no reference to the basic issue of segregation, which I oppose," he told a meeting of Kansas City area businessmen.

"What I had in mind was my fear that any invasion of private rights for whatever cause would give aid and comfort to segregationists and provide them not only with an excuse to prolong their resistance to integration but also afford them the excuse to invade the private rights of Negroes."

Shortly after Negroes began their campaign against lunch counter segregation, Truman said if any demonstrators were to invade a business he owned, he would throw them out.

Truman, in answering questions from the audience, refused to comment on the collapse of the summit conference, saying: "I support the President . . . as long as he's out of the country. I will have nothing to say on the matter until he returns."

The former President said the recent uprisings in Korea and Turkey showed that some governments have not kept up with the times nor the aspirations of their people.

He said it was ironic that such a patriot as Syngman Rhee should be the cause of a revolt in Korea, and added: "He was a staunch partner of the West. . . . In his present difficulties let us not forget it, lest we malign him out of all proportion to his errors. . . ."

As for Turkey, Truman said "a nation cannot suppress the press without jeopardizing all freedoms."

"Democracy cannot exist or prosper without a free press."