

'Spiritual Power' Released If U.S. Admitted Mistakes

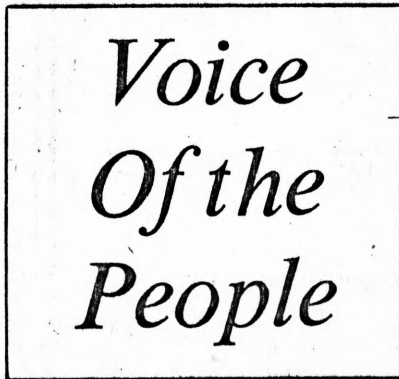
When President Reagan was asked whether America had anything to apologize for in relation to the handling of the recent hijacking, he replied, "Never!" He may be right, but it is also clear that some of America's loyal friends felt wounded by the incident.

Someone sent me a newspaper article from South Africa (a country whose faults America and the world judge sternly). A regional chairman of the white ruling National Party is quoted as saying: "It is very hard to utter the words, 'We are sorry.' We as whites must say we are sorry for our policy which for almost 40 years caused so much suffering to so many other people. If we do this, it will release a spiritual power which will reverse the situation in this country."

It is worth remembering that the

Afrikaners are a very proud people who are just as sensitive to the criticisms of the world as we are in America.

The contrast between these two statements struck me. It is easy to say, of course, that Reagan was totally right and the white South Africans



are totally wrong. However, if we are absolutely honest, we know that from our own experience in life that this is seldom the case. Usually there is some area in every relationship or situation where we could have done better, or where we may have been even slightly at fault. It is much easier to put right or apologize for the 1 percent where we are wrong than for the other person or group to correct the 99 percent that we feel they are wrong.

America expects, rightly, great changes in South Africa and other countries around the world. Consider the "spiritual power" which would be released if we Americans were to take the refreshing approach of frankly admitting our mistakes.

ROBERT L. CORCORAN.

Richmond.