

## Barons on the Ramparts

It has become a government of men fighting for their personal honor and political survival.

There is no personality or cause larger than themselves to hold the Nixon Administration together. It lies exhausted, humiliated and frightened beside the Potomac, a fragmented landscape of individual baronies, each building its own ramparts and reordering its own life. Perhaps the President can put it back together, but the task is immense.

Because Spiro Agnew is the object of criminal inquiries he has been separated more than ever from the Nixon White House operation, if that is possible. Even before the Maryland trouble developed, one White House visitor watched the Vice President and the President in a small social gathering. They shook hands perfunctorily, then sought opposite sides of the room and stayed there. Agnew designed his own tactics in the Maryland case and employed them against the President's wishes. Agnew's frontal response made the President look weaker. Agnew is on his own to survive or die.

In the Justice Department, Attorney General Elliot Richardson is creating his empire with or without White House approval. His new rules of conduct for Justice lawyers were drawn up and instituted by the lawyers themselves. The White House was told, not consulted. The new code requires employees to report sensitive outside contacts. But it allows discourse with members of the press to go unreported. "Whatever stains the integrity of the Department of Justice damages confidence in government itself," said Richardson. "Confidence is as fragile as it is precious, as hard to restore as it is easy to destroy."

Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, Richardson's creation now so roundly hated by the White House, plans to spend the rest of his professional life pursuing the Nixon Administration's corruption, and his domain already includes 33 attorneys and a \$2.8 million annual budget. The other day, when Cox contemplated the possibility that he could be fired by Nixon, he chuckled and allowed as how the President would have to fire Richardson too and in the current medieval atmosphere that might prove hard to do. Every move and every word of Richardson are scrutinized, and since he still has political ambitions his special world of the Justice Department must be blameless. So far it has been.

Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger has been and is committed to the Nixon defense policies, but there is no indication that he ever was committed to the White House methods of falsification and evasion. His good name is on the line, and suddenly there is a new mood of candor in his domain.

In Foggy Bottom the despair of the State Department personnel is turning into anger. "The foreign policy is going to hell and fast," said one knowledgeable and powerful ambassador. If the leadership is not changed, charged another top diplomat, Foreign Service morale is going to sink even lower. There is a tendency now among many of these men and women not even to look for leadership but to do the best job they can on their own.

By most accounts Henry Kissinger wants to become Secretary of State, thereby moving the spectacular foreign policy achievements that he engineered out of the White House and beyond the poison of Watergate. He is undoubtedly motivated by national concern, but there is too profound concern for the reputation of Henry Kissinger. The same personal concern governs an angry and disillusioned William Rogers, Secretary of State. Determined to protect his good name, he sits astride the State Department sensing the rumblings beneath him and the threats from the White House.

The Treasury's George Shultz is a bundle of uncertainty, trying to uphold the disastrous economic policies that the President implemented, often over Shultz's objections. Behind his eyes is the deep worry of how George Shultz, an honored and respected academician, now appears to the real world.



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