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THE PLOT SICKENS

As the Watergate scandal unfolds, exposing an amoral administration, several potential lessons should become apparent to the Congress:

(1) The U.S. Senate, empowered to confirm Presidential appointments to the Cabinet, should take more time and care in the investigation of the various nominees. The Nixon Cabinet, with Mitchell and Stans and others, was certainly, few would deny, one of the worst of modern times.

Victorious Presidents used to reward their campaign managers by appointing them Postmasters General. They in turn would use Post Office patronage for political payoffs. But John F. Kennedy appointed his brother, Bobby, Attorney General when Bobby was hardly qualified for the job. And Richard Nixon paid off John Mitchell with the same important Cabinet post. Warren Harding previously committed a similar error when he appointed Harry Daugherty his Attorney General, and Daugherty helped ruin the Harding Administration. One would have thought that Presidential successors might have learned from the Harding disaster. But no. Apparently any lawyer, no matter how inexperienced or unqualified, is considered fit for the high position of Attorney General of the United States.

(2) Although the separation of powers is a fundamental concept of American government, perhaps Congress should legislate itself the right to confirm, investigate or check on the Presidential advisers. Woodrow Wilson had his Colonel House. Roosevelt had his Harry Hopkins. And Nixon had his Bob Haldeman

and John Ehrlichman. No two men have worked longer or harder or were more loyal to their President than Bob and John. But perhaps they would have been more prudent had they known that they were responsible and accountable to some governmental body or someone other than the President.

(3) For too long Congress has permitted the FBI and the CIA to go relatively unsupervised by members of the Senate and House charged with that assignment.

(4) No one, least of all any President, should use the blanket of "national security" to cover violations of the law. In this country national trust should enjoy a higher priority than national security. The present danger to the United States does not come from without; it comes from within. What the nation needs at the moment is a restoration of faith in government.