

12 noon (?)

Commerce Secretary Frederick Dent defended President Nixon today against his critics in the Watergate furor. Dent spoke at a news conference in Tallahassee, Florida. He said the President's critics are trying to cover up the achievements of the Administration.

Dent [voice]: There are those who will try to pull a Watergate shade over the light of truth, and it is essential that we in America recognize that we have one of the outstanding leaders of all time available to us for the balance of four years more, and it is important for the world at large that he be given an opportunity to fulfil his tremendous leadership potential which will result not in just a generation of peace, but more importantly, the foundations of peace well beyond a generation.

Dent wound up an overnight visit in Tallahassee, where he attended a Republican fund-raising dinner.

[Complete.]