

Mandel: Mandel Criticizes Nation 'Grubby Little Men' Humbled

'Power Elite' Blamed for Watergate

By Ivan G. Goldman
Washington Post Staff Writer

Lamenting that a "few grubby little men have humbled this once proud and mighty nation," Maryland Gov. Marvin Mandel yesterday blamed the Watergate scandal on nonpoliticians from the corporate world who, he said, were trying to take control of the country.

"What we are witnessing, piece by piece," the Democratic governor said, "is a massive scheme by a cynical and callous power elite to remake a nation in its own image.

"The arrogant private army of corrupters had its origins in the hyphenated law firms of Wall Street, the advertising agencies of Madison Avenue and Disneyland, and the board rooms of the most powerful industrial giants in America."

Mandel, chairman of the National Governors' Conference, lashed out in uncharacteristically strong terms against leaders in government and private enterprise who participated in "such a pernicious, ugly business." His remarks were delivered at the commencement exercises of Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Md.

"We have witnessed in the past several weeks," he said, "an erosion of confidence in the very institutions of government, those venerable and sacred offices of public trust—the Justice Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Treasury Department, the Department of Transportation, the Securities Exchange Commission, and the presidency itself.

"So far, 15 ranking presidential and governmental officials have resigned and two former cabinet officers have been indicted. And the end apparently is not in sight.

"And I can't help but observe that across this very mountaintop is (presidential retreat) Camp David—a landmark to the brooding isolation from the realities of America

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that has led us to this desolation and despair."

Not once did Mandel mention the name "Watergate" in his indictment of the Nixon administration. But he left no doubt about the specific cause of his displeasure.

"The ethic of government for a few terrible months," he declared, "had become the ethic of the board room—of industrial espionage — of snooping and spying, of bribing and stealing, of pilfering the competition's secrets, of packaging the presidency, of picking its morals off a drive-in movie marquee.

"I do not assign guilt, or convict in public. I simply point out that the names of Mitchell, Stans, Mardian, Colson, Dean, Magruder, Kleindienst, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Krogh—and all the other closet conspirators — have never appeared on a ballot anywhere in this nation. Not a single one is or was responsible, or responsive, to any electorate or constituency in America."

After citing "the broadening scope of what was once described (by presidential spokesman Ronald Ziegler) as a 'third rate burglary,'" Mandel noted that "suddenly we are told that everything was done in the interest of 'national security.'

"But national security or not, the pattern of events and decisions is beginning to add up to a larger, more sinister and destructive undertaking than any but the most perverse could imagine."

Referring to the convicted Watergate conspirators and to former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans, Mandel observed: "too often we rush in to punish the corrupted, and ignore the corrupters. Would a McCord, or a Liddy, or a Hunt exist without the conspirators who conceived such devious schemes? Would a Mitchell have been indicted if there were no Vesco? And would Stans be walking the plank without the army of favor-seekers who fattened his numerous vaults?"



GOV. MARVIN MANDEL
... speaks of scandal

Mandel found hope because, "Through this crucible, we have witnessed a needed shift, a restoration of balance in a system that for decades appeared top-heavy with executive smugness. We have emerged with renewed confidence in our courts, in the free press, and in the Congress."

He urged the graduates not to turn their backs and "retreat into freakish or faddish isolation," but to "show the same tenacity, the same perseverance, toughness and sureness of spirit that our forefathers showed in the founding of this nation."