

More Watergates?

What Richard Nixon seems to be saying is that we should believe him because he says he is telling the truth (but not Dean who also claimed to be telling the truth). He laments the way the hearings have dragged on, dominating the news media and claiming the public's attention. Yet he still does not answer various charges against him, nor will he release the tapes which might long ago have cleared up some of the obscurity. He says that to release the tapes would destroy the trust men must have when they speak with him in private, yet he thought nothing at all of recording the conversations without their knowledge and releasing some of them to a private citizen. If Haldeman can listen to them without endangering the national security, so can Sam Ervin, and if the President doesn't like to be ordered to do things, he could have magnanimously offered them to the committee even before he was asked, simply as a gesture of goodwill, confident of the truth. Nobody asks that these tapes be published in the newspaper or that confidences other than those pertaining to Watergate be disclosed.

Mr. Nixon says it is time we put Watergate behind us and go on to other things. On the contrary, it is the duty of every citizen to stay with this case until it is settled. If public officials learn that all they need do is sit tight till the citizens become too tired, bored, or apathetic to care any longer and then it will be business as usual, there will be still more Watergates of even larger proportions in the future.

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