

# Greatest Watergate Danger Is Apathy, Weicker Claims

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Speaking before an American University graduating class, Connecticut Sen. Lowell Weicker said yesterday he has been "hard-nosed" about Watergate because he is "not going to see 200 years of deeds by men and women at their best, taken off the shelves of history, piled into mounds, and burned."

Weicker, a Republican member of the Senate Watergate Committee, told the graduates

of AU's College of Public Affairs that the "greatest danger" of Watergate is that "conceived in an ignorant apathy of the electorate, executed in semiconscious apathy . . . it will be forgotten in an apathy of total knowledge. That kind of voting booth acquittal America cannot stand," he said.

Weicker has been one of the Watergate committee's more outspoken members and one of the committee's harshest critics of the White House.

Little of what Weicker told those attending the commencement exercises at the Washington Hebrew Congregation Temple, at Massachusetts Avenue and Macomb Street NW, was new, but the audience didn't seem to mind.

"I am deeply concerned that with Watergate not even concluded, the American people in their anticipation of some new scandal, or in their preoccupation with the guilt or innocence of individuals, are forgetting matters of overriding importance that have been made known, are indisputable fact and which could overwhelm a democracy," Weicker warned.

"Specifically, I refer to the fact of those institutions of government that have been smeared and defaced almost beyond recognition by a handful of constitutional delinquents. What took 200 years to build nearly came down in the quest for four more (years)," he told the applauding audience.

At the temple earlier in the day, U.S. District Judge John Sirica told graduates of the AU College of Law, "The faults of governments the

world over are caused by the indifference and failures of the man in the street to play his proper role and meet his responsibility."

Sirica, who has presided at Watergate-related court proceedings, encouraged the prospective attorneys to "get in there and fight. We have too many spectators in this country already."

Weicker made only the most oblique of references to the current rumors concerning an alleged impending presidential resignation, and he did not call for, or endorse, the impeachment of Richard Nixon.

Instead, he said, "Obviously, I can't agree with those who would go outside the Constitution to determine the guilt or innocence of the President of the United States. I say that because of the emotions of this time . . . At least let's not have our generation enter the Watergate. That's what it was all about from the beginning, far more than any individual's guilt or innocence. Rather, let's do what it is we have to do, if anything, within the laws."

The nation "will live with or without a new fact of scandal," said Weicker. "with or without convictions. The type of matter it cannot survive is the law enforcement, intelligence capability of government politically used as an incumbent's edge."

The senator then went on to charge that while the so-called Houston Plan, a plan for the gathering of information against domestic "radicals and subversives," may not have been approved "de jure, you now know it was carried out defacto."