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Saxbe Calls

Watergate

A 'Cloud'

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Attorney General William B. Saxbe yesterday called Watergate "the greatest cloud in our history" and warned that the nation might not be able to surmount another scandal of such dimensions.

The former Ohio Republican senator made his most extensive comment on Watergate since becoming attorney general last January in a speech at commencement exercises at the Ohio State University Law School.

"We now live under what I believe historians will conclude is the greatest cloud in our history," Saxbe said.

The scandal that has engulfed high public officials and subjected the President to an impeachment inquiry must become a "watershed" for morality in public life, Saxbe said, because "the next Watergate may grow to dimensions that would prove to be insurmountable."

The balances of power in government must be bolstered by "unrelenting public scrutiny" over public officials to keep corruption out, he said.

Without mentioning any Watergate defendants by name, Saxbe said not all officials who misbehave are "merely colorful rascals . . . some are men of finely distilled evil who would do irreparable damage to our freedom."

"Would-be tyrants appear in many guises other than that of the storm trooper," he said. "Some in blue jeans are apostles of new left terrorism."

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