

Persistence Of Watergate Damage Seen

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Even when the Watergate crisis is a thing of the past, confidence in government will not automatically or necessarily be restored, Patrick J. Buchanan, an assistant to President Nixon, said yesterday.

Confidence in government was undermined by the government's failure to meet "the exaggerated expectations" and promises of the 1960s, Buchanan said in a speech at Sangamon State University in Springfield, Ill.

Calling Watergate "an episodic thing" and a problem of one administration, Buchanan said the deeper problem is the failure of the political philosophy of the 1960s "based upon belief in the inevitability of progress, the perfectibility of man, and faith in government as the architect of a great society."

"Beneficent big government is another god that failed," he said.

Restoration of a healthy respect for government requires that government cease expanding its role and "begin a strategic retreat all along the front," the Nixon aide said.

What is needed, he added, "is for government to begin its own Long March, a strategic retreat from domestic empire."

Buchanan accused "the great Eastern media, and the national networks" of being "less and less news gathering and reporting organizations and more and more media arms of a particular ideology."

To give "balance in coverage and commentary," Buchanan said the media should treat statements of Ralph Nader "to the same chilly reception, occasionally, as those of Richard Nixon," raise "an equal amount of hell about cost overruns in poverty and welfare programs as about those in the Pentagon," treat "dissent as something less than divine revelation," and give defenders of the nation "equal time with the more telegenic and intolerant, demanding instant change."