



The Evidence Is Piling Up

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ALMOST ALL of us have some Watergate crow to eat. In my own case there is a particularly large act of recantation to perform since I was not only highly sympathetic to Mr. Nixon in 1968 but also persistently scoffed thereafter at charges the administration was endangering constitutional liberties.

But the Senate hearings have shown that this country was indeed being pushed in the direction of a police state. The pushers were not mere apparatchiks such as John Dean, but the President and his closest associates. The evidence comes not from hearsay but from solemn documents supported by an abundance of interlocking testimony.

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BEGIN WITH the lists of White House "enemies" which the committee unearthed last week thanks to the courageous determination of the young Republican Senator from Connecticut, Lowell Weicker. Those lists were part of an action program to mobilize the full power of darkness available to the federal government against the political opposition. The purpose, as one of the covering memos acknowledged, was to "use the available federal machinery to screw our political enemies."

The memos indicated that screwing our enemies meant such things as prosecution by the Justice Department and trumping up scandal.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation was brought into the most crude political operations, including a wholly illegitimate investigation of aspects of the Chappaquiddick incident involving Senator Edward Kennedy. There was wiretapping,

bugging and personal surveillance on a very large scale.

The Central Intelligence Agency was also used, in ways specifically barred by statute, for domestic political purposes. This abuse reached its high point in the effort to have the CIA provide a cover for the Watergate burglars.

According to testimony supported by contemporary memos, the chief proponent of that effort was the President's closest political associate and White House chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman. His other close associate, John Ehrlichman, played a role in the affair. They did so, as the President's official statement of May 22 indicates, at the express direction of Mr. Nixon himself.

When the FBI and CIA were insufficient, the Nixon White House did not scruple to act through their own goon squads. Break-ins against private citizens were organized by White House personnel apparently operating under the direction of Ehrlichman.

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I DO NOT want to overdraw the picture, but there was a systematic effort to set up what amounts to a police state. As Chairman Sam Ervin of the Senate committee has been steadily asserting, that effort is in conflict with the role of the President as defined by the Constitution.

The questions raised by that defiance of the Constitution cannot be answered by mere presidential press conferences. They can probably not even be answered in a separate set of committee hearings. It may well be that these emerging questions can only be answered in an impeachment proceedings.