



# Non-Government of The United States

— Joseph Alsop

**N**OW THAT the Watergate investigating committee has graciously recessed, it may interest a few people that the U.S. government is remarkably close to grinding to a halt. The ultimate cause is Watergate-intoxication in the Senate, so you can blame the President if you choose. But the Senate is still the body that has chosen to halt the government in many vital ways.

To get an idea of what is happening, you need only glance at a single area where even the dilatory Senate used to be capable of reasonably swift decisions. In the bad old days, the Senate cherished two principles in dealing with vacancies in really major government posts.

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**F**IRST, the President was considered to have a right to fill major posts with men of his choice — unless they could be shown to have really grave deficiencies. Second, it was also considered improper to leave posts like the secretaryship of Defense, or the directorship of the Central Intelligence Agency, in a kind of empty limbo for undue periods of time.

Today, however, we have had no Secretary of Defense since the President transferred Elliot Richardson to the Justice Department. The CIA has also been leaderless since the President decided to give the Defense Department to his new CIA director, James Schlesinger, and to promote the able CIA professional, William Colby, to the directorship Schlesinger has abandoned.

No Senator on the Armed Services Committee can need to know much more about Schlesinger, since exhaustive hear-

ings were held before he was confirmed for the CIA directorship. As to Colby, no one anywhere has so much as whispered that this was not a good choice by President Nixon.

Presumably, the Defense Department and the CIA will now cease to be headless in a few days' time. But this is only because of the forceful intervention from his hospital bed of the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator John C. Stennis.

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**A**S TO WHAT Senator J. William Fulbright is currently doing in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee — the problem has been the President's choice of four distinguished foreign service veterans for high posts here and abroad.

Because of their past service in Southeast Asia, the four veterans were all subject to Fulbright's veto. They were adjudged to be guilty men, and confirmation was initially refused to all four. Under heavy pressure from the senior Republican on his committee, Senator George Aiken, Fulbright then gave way on the nomination of the former Ambassador to Thailand and Italy, Graham A. Martin, to be the new U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam.

The argument used was the need to have an Ambassador to deal with President Nguyen Van Thieu at this tricky juncture. All kinds of ego-massage, not just for Fulbright, but also for other committee members like Senator Jacob Javits, was further demanded, and provided, before the confirmation of Graham Martin was reluctantly conceded.