

The 'Watergates' of the Past

To the Editor:

At the Senate hearings in Washington, John Dean produced a long list of supposed enemies of President Nixon. It seems farfetched to associate that list with the Watergate folly, but if there is any link at all, that link might be a parallel.

Where did the list come from? Was it stolen from the White House or the President? If so, Mr. Dean has so much in common with Mr. Liddy and his group, who tried to steal documents from Democratic headquarters.

Other than that, all the list does is add to the explosive and inflammatory propaganda with which the news media have been deluging the country for weeks. A lot of people must believe that the heavens are about to fall. This is sheer nonsense.

I remember a telephone call from Senator Reed in the nineteen-thirties to tell me that my phone was being tapped, and so were those of many other Republican members of Congress. I replied that I didn't care a continental since anything I said about President Roosevelt the President could learn from my speeches in the Congress and on radio.

Later on in 1939, the House and Senate elected me over Senator Barkley as chairman of the Congressional committee to the Interparliamentary Union Conference in Oslo, Norway. I attended that conference two weeks before the outbreak of World War II, and was promptly spied upon by our own Government. Reports of my visits with British Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax and French Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet are now resting in the archives of the State Department.

And speaking of "enemies," no one had more political enemies than the highly vindictive F.D.R. I was one of

them, and for five years my income tax reports were minutely investigated (as were my wife's). That effort occupied at least half a dozen Internal Revenue agents and must have cost at least \$50,000. The result: I got an \$80 refund.

You might ask why I didn't complain to Speaker Rayburn when I found out that my wires were being tapped. There is a simple answer: He would have told me that there was nothing I could do about it.

And this sums up the situation. During all of the Roosevelt and most of the Johnson Administrations, the Democrats controlled Congress, so no matter what a Democratic President would do, there was no chance whatever of having an open investigation, much less one broadcast nationwide on television.

If the current investigation goes any further, it is bound to prompt the revelation of cover-ups in the Roosevelt Administration as well as in the Johnson-Bobby Baker episode, which the Republicans did not, at the time, want to publicize since such publicity would have impaired the confidence and faith of the American people in both the Congress and the President.

The Watergate fiasco is mere peanuts to what Clare Boothe Luce referred to when she said F.D.R. lied us into war—a war in which 300,000 Americans were killed and 650,000 wounded—and at Yalta, where half the world was turned over to Stalin and Communism.

There is an old saying that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Revelation of the cover-ups under Roosevelt and Johnson would make Watergate look like a mosquito bite.

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The writer was a U.S. Representative from 1921 to 1945.