WIGATE

Original filed Nixon.
See also SFChronicle 1 Aug 73; SFCh [WXPost] 1 Aug 73, this file

...hat Higher (Than the Law) Morality

...and fur rugs and velvet wallpaper to ...ist of small, vicious, murky, unimportant, little things" (like reg wigs, ...g and little shredders, Mr. Ulasewicz's coin changer, etc., etc.) that Mr. Nixon, fonting the emperor of Japan, said will not distract him from the business of making the world even better.

Poor Prime Minister Tanaka wanted to talk about important little things like soybeans. But he arrived at a moment when Mr. Nixon was preoccupied with appearing unimpressed with the public's unfathomable desire to wallow in reports about the rugs and wallpaper that—according to yet another Watergate disclosure—were to help Mr. Nixon's agents sabotage, photograph and blackmail the friends of Mary Jo Kopechne.

Mr. Tanaka must find the Occident less amusable than usual these days. His visit began just after John Ehrlichman had pronounced the Nixon administration the last, best hope for the defense of family life. And Mr. Tanaka left just as reports about the rugs and wallpaper indicated the depth of administration suspicion that Sen. Edward Kennedy (the target of the blackmail scheme involving Miss Kopechne's friends) falls short of the administration's moral standards.

Having heard Mr. Nixon's case dismissed as the avalanche of felonies ...Tanaka may have concluded that the administration has no moral position other than wanting ...

...its abundant and sincere moral convictions are grotesquely asymmetric.

In my judgment, the administration's bizarre jumble of ethical convictions signifies what grotesquely random and asymmetric beliefs often signify: a particular kind of derangement.

Consider John Mitchell, original symbol of the administration, the "tough cop," fulfillment of Mr. Nixon's most frequently repeated and fervently felt 1968 campaign pledge, the rescue of the republic from the permissiveness of Ramsey Clark. When the Senate Watergate committee asked Mr. Mitchell if there were anything

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he would not have done to ease the re-election of Mr. Nixon, Mr. Mitchell said he would have thought long and hard about joining his employees in perjury and he almost certainly would have stopped short of treason.

Cynical? I think not. Just a reflection of the administration's unique moral calculus.

Consider Mr. Ehrlichman. He has an opinion about whether Mr. Nixon can order a mere robberies but excessive drinking and what to do about it. Mr. Ehrlichman has been interested in the question of whether the President can authorize a break-in but not whether he can authorize the use of marijuana. The morality of public officials, he implies, is a department of the White House that is beautiful of public figures.

Excessive drinking (by Democrats) ...

committed on the administration's fur rugs) offend Mr. Ehrlichman almost as much as does negative mattering about Mr. Nixon's dutiful burglaries. ... according to Mr. Ehrlichman's moral calculus, the media should be more indignant about congressional "loitering" and John Dean's honeymoon than about Mr. Nixon's burglaries.

Having diagnosed the asymmetry of the administration's moral convictions, I am prepared to believe that Mr. Ehrlichman is genuinely perplexed by the fact that many people do not approve of Mr. Nixon's ... He wonders: Don't they understand that national security ... confound the Kraut ... many "necessary lunacy" of Quiet Elliott Richardson? Don't the public understand that ... Mr. Nixon must now ... can we ... [illegible]

When Mr. ... asked what he thought of the principle that not even a king can trespass without warrant against a humble psychiatrist's cottage, Mr. Ehrlichman said he was afraid that principle had been "eroded." When an impenitent eroder says he is afraid erosion has taken ... we must conclude one of two things. He ... moral or he is confused ... the point of ...

When people who vote ... Mr. Ehrlichman seem to ... his ... to be ... urgent ... [illegible] ... they ... [illegible] ... Democrats ... [illegible] ... they must defend the administration against the charge of insincerity. But if the summit is correct, the administration is guilty of sincerity. It believes what it says and it does what it does. ... the question is, is stark envy a ... incompetence ground in ... [illegible]