

A leaderless government?

The withdrawal of President Nixon from active control and direction of the government is beginning to worry Republican leaders in Congress almost as much as the tidal wave of impeachment.

Virtually all contact has been severed between President Nixon's congressional leaders and the White House. Indeed, mesmerized by the fatal turn of events since the House Judiciary Committee voted its impeachment articles with overwhelming bipartisan majorities last week, the White House is also dangerously insulating itself from vital decision-making and workaday operations of its own agencies and departments. Only foreign policy seems immune and only because Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has unique standing.

As one high-ranking Republican leader in the House told us: "They have disappeared into the White House bunkers looking for an impeachment strategy that doesn't exist."

The potentially critical loss of administration involvement in nonimpeachment congressional business was dramatized last Tuesday on the floor of the House. No Oval Office sign was received on the budget-busting mass transit conference report. The bill, carrying \$800 million more for the current fiscal year than the White House wanted, was ticketed for routine passage.

At the last minute, Rep. John Anderson of Illinois, chairman of the House Republican Conference, contacted Rep. Chalmers Wylie of Ohio, a Republican member of the mass transit subcommittee of the House Banking Committee. Together, they decided that a motion to recommit the bill to conference committee might pass. Wylie offered it, Anderson spoke for it and the bill was sent back to conference.

"I think it would have been a White House operation for sure, but we never heard a word," Anderson told us.

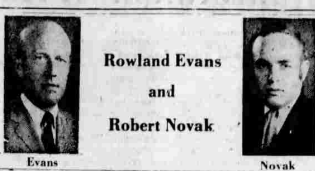
On The Right

I have not lately remarked on the airlines, for complicated reasons. For one, most of the people one runs into—at the terminals, for example—are the nicest in the world, and one does not like to criticize. This extends even to most of those who search your briefcases for hand grenades. I say most, because I have in mind the lady in Los Angeles who plucked out a package of Preparation H and demanded to know from me in loud tones whether it works.

And, for another, the airlines have been going through a very rough period. Indeed, they were losing money at a frightful rate after the Arab states thought it would be amusing to quadruple the cost of oil. But the response of the airlines was faintly optimistic, and one had the impression that they cancelled a lot of flights less because they needed to conserve fuel, than because they wanted an excuse to renege their services. Of course, one can hardly blame a company losing money for pulling back its services; still, when in doubt, try candor, I say, and a little more of this would be helpful.

There are, besides, the little opportunities. Two months during the winter I work in Europe, and of course am required by the light of my life to take along three small dogs. Shipping them back, this last time, in two small kennels, the bill came to \$415. I wrote to TWA asking whether the billing machine might have slipped a decimal point to the east. In reply I received a letter telling me that excess baggage is calculated at a rate that takes into account weight and cubic volume. The fact of the matter is that the airlines have got themselves a rate that makes it about as expensive to send a dog by airmail, as a human being first-class, even as the differences between the two modes of travel continue to diminish.

Minutes and hours
TWA is developing some irksome habits. Boarding the other day at San Francisco at noon, it was after 1 p.m. before they got around to serving you what they



Rowland Evans
and
Robert Novak

Likewise, within the administration, cabinet members who have had only one formal meeting with Mr. Nixon since mid-June are steering as clear as they can from asking White House decisions on new policy. Three cabinet members of us they are spending much of their time outside Washington, concentrating when here on drafting their new budget requests for next year and avoiding contact with top presidential aides inside the White House.

The mood was summed up by one "I don't even talk about impeachment because if I did I might find myself pulling the ripcord and bailing out."

Even in the desperately critical area of the economy President Nixon has been avoiding all but cursory involvement. He has called a couple of highly publicized but meaningless sessions with big business and private economists. Far more important, however, he has had not one single private huddle with Mr. Arthur Burns, the powerful chairman of the Federal Reserve Board since Jan. 1. In all that time, Burns has been to the White House only for a few formal meetings of the Quadripart, the government's top-level economic policy body.

Noting the absence of the prestigious Burns at the much-hailed July 11 White House economic session with top industrialists and private economists, Mr. Nixon in an attempt to humor and occasionally allow me to talk to him. What Mr. Nixon did not say was that Mr. Burns

was not even invited. Time and again these past few weeks the President has abruptly cancelled or postponed one meeting after another with his top aides: Secretary of the Treasury William Simon on the morning of July 26, Secretary of Housing James Lynn on July 24, both rescheduled, and two meetings of his economic advisers last Thursday which still have not been held.

Each of those postponements directly resulted from the President's impeachment battle.

No direction
Yet, despite the desperate 24-hour-a-day search for a way out, the impeachment noise continues to tighten. One top-level Republican strategist is talking about "salvaging" some Republicans now leaning toward a pre-impeachment vote, not to prevent impeachment but to make the vote slightly more respectable for the President.

A Southern Democratic leader now sees a better than even chance that the entire Democratic delegations of North Carolina, Georgia and Alabama will end up voting for impeachment. A Northern, pro-Nixon Republican counts only 25 Southern Democrats against impeachment from Maryland to Texas.

Thus, no matter how much the President continues to withdraw from the workaday operations of the federal government in pursuit of self-preservation, his search for salvation may be doomed. The coming months, then, will test a novel proposition: Whether the American government can run itself without direction from the top.

Former Aides Face New Defense Woes

From A-1

of the Watergate burglars. NOTING THAT Barker and others arrested in the breaking had once been active in the CIA's Bay of Pigs fiasco, Halde-ma briefed the president on Mitchell's idea for using the CIA to curtail the FBI.

According to the transcript, Halde-ma said: "Mitchell came up with (a proposal) yesterday, and John Dean analyzed very carefully last night and concludes, concurs now with Mitchell's recommendations that the only way to solve this, and we're set to go, is to go to the CIA."

Phone Dispute Ends; Both Sides Win Suits

A bitter dispute between the giants in the independent telephone marketplace apparently is coming to an end, with each side winning a bit in two lawsuits.

Judge Hiram H. Ward ruled in a U. S. Middle District Court case in Greensboro that one of the giants is barred from collecting damages from subsidiaries of the other giant.

The federal court judge, in ruling on the local case, took note that a ruling in a similar case in Hawaii had resulted, however, in an order that the giant with subsidiaries reduce its holdings.

The complex dispute has been between International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. (ITT) and General Telephone and Electronics Corp. (GTE Service Corp., GTE Automatic Electric Inc. and General Telephone Companies of the Southeast and Alabama (the GTE group).

In ruling on the suit filed by ITT in his court, which contained anti-trust and monopoly charges, Judge Ward said ITT had split its cases of action in the Hawaiian case and that the suit here caused damages of \$6 million was barred.

The court in Hawaii earlier ordered GTE to divest itself of some of its subsidiaries. Judge Ward indicated that ITT should have included its claims for damages in the Hawaiian case rather than filing the suit in Middle District Court.

In both actions, ITT had ac-

way to handle this now is for use to have Walters call Pat Gray and just say, 'stay to hell out of this—this is a business here we don't want you to go any further on it.'"

He was referring to Lt. Gen. Vernon A. Walters, then deputy director of the CIA, and L. Patrick Gray III, then the FBI's acting director. Dean was then White House counsel. Halde-ma told the President he felt "that would take care of it."

THE PRESIDENT then asked, "What about Pat Gray—you mean Pat Gray doesn't want to?"

This exchange followed: Halde-ma — "Pat does want

to. He doesn't know how to, and he doesn't have any basis for doing it. Given this, he will then have the basis. He'll call Mark Felt (his deputy) in, and the two of them — and Mark Felt wants to co-operate because he's ambitious."

President — "Yeah."

Halde-ma — "He'll call him in and say, 'we've got the signal from across the river (the CIA) to put the hold on this.' And that will fit rather well because the FBI agents who are working the case, at this point, feel that's what it is."

Halde-ma then mentioned Ehrlichman's role as he reviewed the President's approval for such a plan. According to the transcript, the following dialogue took place:

Halde-ma — "And you seem to think the thing to do is get them to stop?"

President — "Right, fine." Halde-ma — "They say the only way to do that is from White House instructions. And it's got to be to (then CIA director) Richard Helms and in — ah, what's his name... ? Walters."

President — "And the proposal would be that Ehrlichman and I call them in and say, uh..."

President — "All right, fine. How do you call him in — I mean you just — well, we protected Helms from one hell of a lot of things."

Halde-ma — "That's what Ehrlichman says."

LATER, Halde-ma spoke of "the CIA (turnoff)" referring to use of that agency to intercept the FBI probe.

"I'm not going to get that involved. I'm (unintelligible)," the President replied, according to the transcript.

"No, Sir, we don't want you to," Halde-ma said.

Several times the President and Halde-ma mentioned they were fearful that previous activities of E. Howard Hunt Jr. would be disclosed by the FBI probe.

Hunt, as a White House consultant, had sought to gather personal information about the life of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), had performed chores in the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. affair and had helped plan the break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

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The fact that a utility company is a monopoly has nothing to do with its need to communicate with its customers. Being the only electric utility in our service area lets us produce and deliver electricity to you at the lowest possible cost—without duplication of expensive generating equipment, transmission lines and highly skilled workers.



Q Doesn't Duke Power's advertising cause the cost of electricity to go up?

A It could, if we let it. But the small amount of advertising we do is the most economical way to communicate with our many customers in the Carolinas.

For example, if you're an average residential customer, the cost of our advertising in 1973 was included in your electric bill at about two cents a month.

Misunderstanding of our activities, on the other hand, could cause delays in necessary projects. The delays could affect our ability to serve you, and also push electric rates even higher.

Q Why doesn't Duke Power settle that strike at the Brookside Mine, instead of raising its rates to pay for more expensive coal?

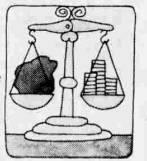
A The United Mine Workers' strike at the Brookside Mine has had little effect on the cost of coal used by Duke Power.

At the time the strike began, Brookside produced only about three per cent of Duke Power's coal. This loss has been offset by moving scarce mining equipment from Brookside to other company-owned mines—allowing them to increase their output.

Although the Brookside Mine is not producing, the coal is still there. It may someday be of even greater benefit to you.

Q My last power bill showed that I was charged .2686 cents per kilowatt-hour as a "coal cost adjustment charge." If the price of coal goes down, will I receive the benefit of the lower cost?

A Yes. The "coal cost adjustment charge" works both ways. Bills are adjusted each month by the amount the cost of coal varies above or below the base price established by the regulatory agencies in December, 1973.



Q Where does Duke Power buy nuclear fuel?

A In the United States, uranium is mined and made into fuel pellets by private companies. The only part of nuclear fuel processing still controlled by the government is "enrichment," which increases the percentage of usable fuel in the pellets. The Atomic Energy Commission is legally required to earn a profit on this process, to assure that utilities such as Duke Power are not subsidized by the taxpayers.

Q Can existing coal-fired power plants be converted to nuclear plants?

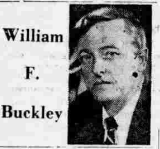
A Coal-fired plants operate at much higher steam temperatures and pressures than nuclear plants, so it's not practical to convert. Besides, no coal-fired power plant or any other industrial facility could meet the very strict safety standards required in the design and construction of a nuclear power plant.

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William F. Buckley



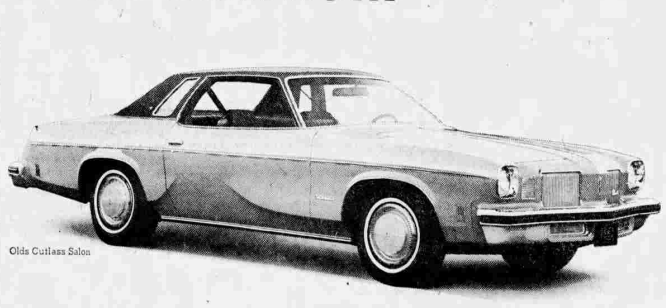
call "an alcoholic beverage." Why should it take an hour? If they tell you it's because they are overbooked, the obvious reply is that they are understaffed. In fact it is a matter of organization—pure and simple; as witness that some of the airlines manage in a matter of minutes to accomplish what takes others hours.

And then I have had news for Aerolineas de Mexico. It is altogether possible that Iberia is winning the contest. En route back to New York recently, Iberia served some hors d'oeuvres that were hard to beat. One, in particular, a pale pink cheesy thing, with sudden crust, tasteless bitter center that crumbled in your fingers, sticks in your throat, and curls in your stomach. Aerolineas has clearly taken on years and years to develop the worst cuisine in the air, and obviously takes pride in its long primacy—but Iberia has over-considerable period been hard at work, and I offer it as the opinion of this amateur that the crown is theirs.

There is no movie, no music, the food is inedible, the bar closes a couple of hours before you reach New York, the lounge is unacceptable because "little moppet" is sitting there, the niece of the niece of the inspector, the service is Medium-Sullen. But here, Aerolineas definitely has the edge, inasmuch as the service is somewhere between sullen and nutritious. I am told by weathered friends that people fly whole continents out of their way—going, for instance, from Venezuela to Spain via New York—in order to spare themselves the ordeal of flying there.

I predict, on the matter of food and drink, that there is a future for the really good box lunch. It should be sold at major airports and contain maybe a little celery remoulade, a cold slightly

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Morehead Sets 7 Guest Nights

CHAPEL HILL — Morehead Observatory at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will sponsor seven Friday Guest Nights this fall, Sept. 6 and 20, Oct. 4 and 18, and Nov. 1, 15, and 29 at 8 p.m.

Through its Guest Night Program, Morehead Observatory provides the public with the opportunity to view selected celestial objects, such as the Ring Nebula in the constellation Lyra, the Great Cluster in Hercules

and the planet Jupiter. The observatory is in the new wing of the Morehead Building. There is no charge but a ticket is required for admission. For tickets write: Guest Night, Department of Physics and Astronomy, 278 Phillips Hall, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27534. When requesting tickets, list first, second and third choice and the number of tickets desired.