

by President Nixon's dependence on him to protect him against his own inner weakness and irresolution.

Ehrlichman on Nixon

FROM ENTERING the President's mind, it was but a short step for his protectors to go even further and speak the President's mind. Quite early in the Nixon administration, a shaken Cabinet-level official and old friend of the President's described to me a White House meeting at which Ehrlichman had proposed a new domestic program. The official challenged him, saying that the proposal contradicted what he knew of Nixon's values and philosophy. Ehrlichman coldly informed the official that the President didn't have any philosophy—he did what was feasible and tactically rewarding.

"Ehrlichman didn't realize what he was saying," the official told me. "I know Nixon has values and a philosophy, but why doesn't Ehrlichman? And why does Nixon rely on a man like that?"

The President's dependence for political counsel on Mitchell—called in his heyday "El Supremo"—led him into a succession of avoidable confrontations and disasters. Republican leaders in the Congress, who were ordered to close ranks behind the likes of Supreme Court nominee G. Harrold Carswell, had no voice in the councils leading to such gross misjudgments. Yet the conservative barons of the Senate—Barry Goldwater, John Tower, Strom Thurmond—who had played a decisive role in Mr. Nixon's

Dick Weather in Wix Post 5/6/73

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