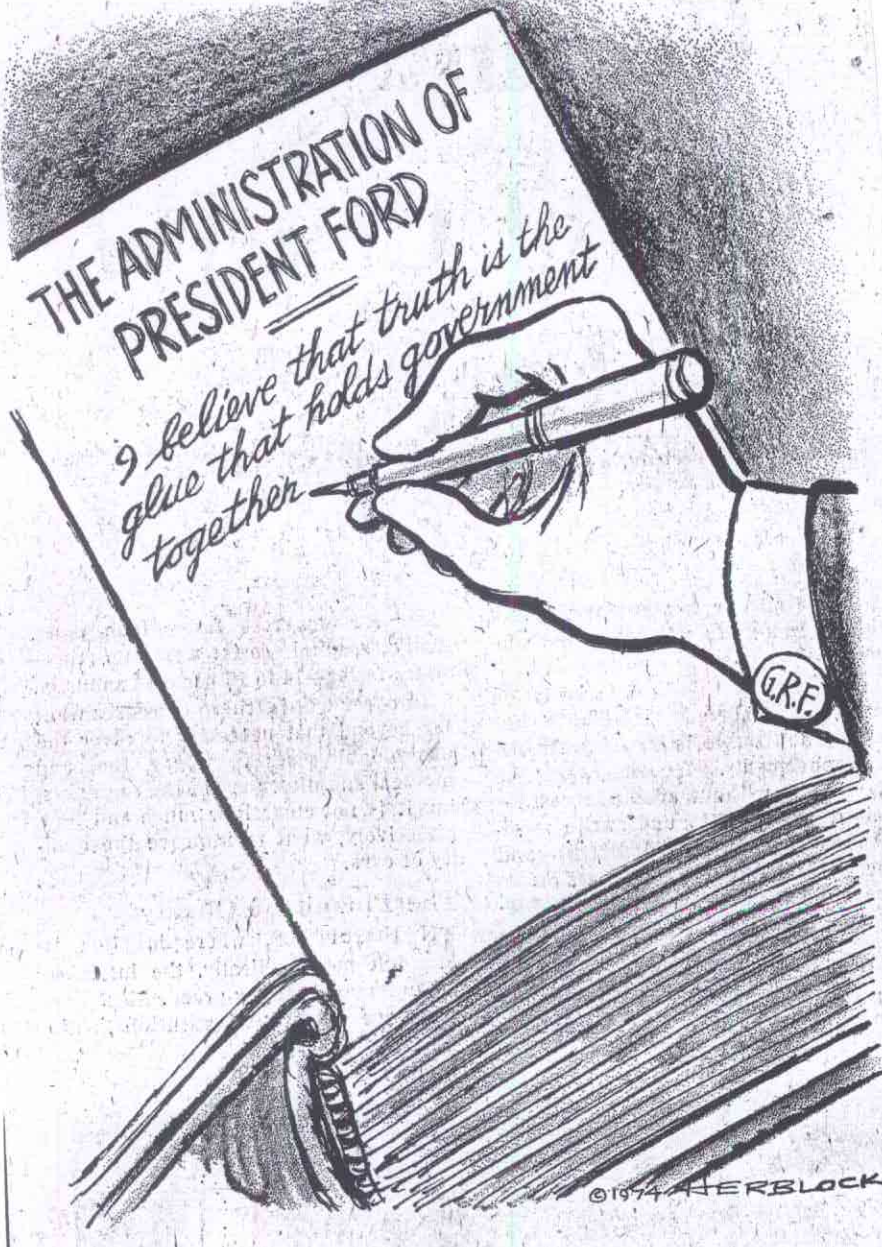


AUGUST 11, 1974

New Book



Aid for Vietnam

CONGRESS, in its deliberations on aid for South Vietnam, is shying away from the central issue: What is the American interest? For if it matters to the United States whether Saigon fares well or ill, one aid strategy is dictated; and if not, another. To proceed as though the level and kind of aid has no real connection to the goal of American policy is to fly blind.

Like many Americans, we had hoped that the Paris Agreement of 1973 would launch the contending Vietnamese on the path to eventual reconciliation. This would have resolved the America dilemma. But it has not happened. Hanoi and Saigon are still fighting; it looks as though they will for a long time. If one side or the other were clearly at fault, that would be one thing. We accept, however, the judgment of a new Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff study: "Lack of respect for the Agreement is so widespread that it is impossible to apportion responsibility for the continued fighting."

This bears directly on congressional efforts to cut aid. It would be grievously unfair in our view for the United States—by withholding aid—to penalize Saigon alone for a breakdown which is properly the responsibility of both Vietnamese sides. Nor does withholding aid become any fairer in these circumstances when it is described as a way to induce President Thieu to honor the Paris Agreement and to make concessions to his Vietnamese rivals. We have leaned toward this view ourselves in the past. But looking at the record of the last 20 months, we have had second thoughts. We now conclude that it is wrong to try to make Saigon alone observe the agreement, to its political detriment, when Hanoi is under no similar pressure to observe its side of the agreement. Unilateral pressure, furthermore, precludes a new American approach to Moscow and Peking—an approach we believe should be made—to reduce further all outsiders' roles, especially as arms suppliers.

The only correct basis for phasing out aid, we now believe, is a determination that it no longer is important to the United States what happens in South Vietnam. A powerful case for this can be made: the United States has invested an immense amount of blood, treasure and prestige in Vietnam, won that country the opportunity to fend for itself, and now has its own good reason to turn aside. But if this determination is to be made, we Americans owe to ourselves—and to the Vietnamese and to others elsewhere who rely upon us—to make it openly. To pledge fidelity but to reduce our support progressively

or even precipitately is to undermine both interest and honor. If the Congress in its fatigue or wisdom—whatever the mix—is to pare aid this year and to threaten to cut even more next year, it should have the courage to announce that it no longer considers the outcome in Vietnam as a matter of American consequence. To cut aid while claiming that the cut will actually improve Saigon's chances of securing its own salvation is double-talk. To cut aid while declaring that the *people* of South Vietnam will benefit from the new policies thereby forced upon President Thieu is at best, speculation; in our view, it is too flimsy a foundation for policy.

The alternative approach is, of course, to acknowledge a continuing interest in the fate of Saigon and to act accordingly on aid. This is the course we have come to favor, after having inclined the other way during the past 20 months. What has persuaded us to change our view is largely the prime new fact that a mutually acceptable political solution has seemed progressively to recede from reach. We think that Americans would not like to live in a world where a small nation that had strong reason to rely on American steadfastness had been let down. In that sense, the American "commitment" to Saigon is open-ended. To hold otherwise is to advertise one's own unreliability. It can be argued, with all too much merit, that the assurance of American support lets Saigon ignore American efforts to induce changes in its domestic policies and in its attitude towards Hanoi. The answer—surely worth testing—is that Saigon may become more responsive to American advice as it becomes less fearful of American abandonment.

Aid to Vietnam should be offered on the basis of what dollar levels and what forms of aid (economic or military) and what particular programs will enable Saigon to tend effectively to its citizens' security and welfare. This formulation admittedly leaves many loose ends, many unresolved arguments, many uncertainties. There is in the United States an evident shortage of economic and political resources to assure success. And whether the Thieu government can adequately respond is a question bound to trouble any realistic observer. We are convinced, nonetheless, that the principle of American steadfastness deserves to be honored as best we can, even though the particular government benefiting from its application in this instance is far from a model regime. There is where the overriding American interest lies.

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

The Unfinished Business

LAST MONDAY MORNING we had the prospect of an impeachment proceeding in the House and a protracted trial of President Nixon in the Senate, whose outcome was at least somewhat in doubt. By Friday we had President Ford. It is important for all of us to be clear in our minds about the events that intervened and their relation to all that had gone before. For today's widespread and bipartisan sense of relief needs to be firmly grounded in an equally widespread understanding of the legitimacy and the inevitability of Mr. Ford's accession to office.

The convulsive events that seemed so suddenly to catapult Gerald Ford into the presidency were in fact the logical consequence of his predecessor's conduct. Contrary to former President Nixon's characterization of those events, it was not some abrupt and aberrational political upheaval, depriving him of his "political base," that compelled his departure. The opportunity for a fair trial and ultimate judgment by the Senate awaited him. What he lost was his own confidence in the outcome. And the reason he lost it was that a complex constitutional process, involving the courts, the Congress and his own appointed Special Prosecutor had—with more hindrance than help from him—brought forth evidence sufficient to persuade even his defenders and his close associates that he must be removed from office. And so he decided to remove himself first. Mr. Nixon was not "hounded" out of office. Perhaps more to the point, no precedent was established by last week's events for the arbitrary or capricious removal of future Presidents from office.

There may be a tendency to attribute last week's result to the dramatic production on Monday afternoon of a relatively small fragment of highly incriminatory evidence against Mr. Nixon; and surely the disclosure of his early role in the Watergate cover-up, as described in the now famous June 23, 1972 White House conversation, accelerated a rush to vote impeachment. But it is worth briefly recalling what had gone before, without benefit of this evidence: a solid bipartisan vote in the House Judiciary Committee of three separate articles of impeachment; a flood of indictments, guilty pleas and convictions involving Mr. Nixon's highest ranking sub-

ordinates and closest confidants; the naming of the former President as an unindicted co-conspirator by the Watergate grand jury; a unanimous Supreme Court decision ordering him to surrender material he was withholding from the Special Prosecutor; a torrent of damaging evidence at the Senate Watergate Committee's summer-long hearings a full year ago; and, perhaps most conclusively, a crude and reckless move by the President to rid himself of his first Special Prosecutor, which finally impelled the House of Representatives to authorize the start of impeachment proceedings by an overwhelming vote.

Like everybody else, we would prefer to put these grim events behind us, just as we would have welcomed some help in this respect from Mr. Nixon. But the former President's particular manner of leaving office, and his public account of his reasons for doing so not only raised mischievous questions concerning the validity of the process whereby Mr. Ford assumed office but also seriously complicated some very difficult decisions having to do with the unfinished business of Watergate. On the first score, we are not ourselves greatly concerned: the record of events we have recited—even without so much as a shred of acknowledgment of them by Mr. Nixon—would seem to us amply to

account for and justify last week's unique transfer of presidential power. But the success of Mr. Ford's presidency, as distinct from its clear legitimacy, is going to depend in some considerable part on how he deals with some of the more sensitive, not to say explosive, legacies of Watergate.

We would describe these legacies as follows:

A certain number of Mr. Nixon's associates have already pleaded guilty to or been convicted of felonies, and some have already been imprisoned, while others have been indicted and are awaiting trial. Several grand juries are still at work or subject to call and they are considering alleged crimes and conspiracies which could involve the former President. As noted, Mr. Nixon has been named an unindicted co-conspirator in the main Watergate cover-up case—and by a grand jury which indicated clearly that it would have indicted him had he been a private citizen. So Mr. Nixon is now subject to being caught up in most if not all of these proceedings, whether as a potential defendant or as a witness. There is a strong and understandable national impulse to spare the former President further indignities as an individual, and to shield the office he held from further disgrace. Yet the consequences of such an act of generosity would be considerable; first there would be the inequity to those Nixon lieutenants and agents who have already been punished or who may be as a result of further judicial proceedings. Would they have to be pardoned and/or immunized, as well? And if this were to be the case, how would it square with the administration of justice in relation to other citizens of this country? And how, moreover, would it square with Mr. Ford's freshly undertaken obligation to take care

that the laws be faithfully executed?

Finally, there is the matter of the public's rights and expectations. We venture to say that most people don't wish to be further bombarded with the shellbursts of scandal and agitated news that have characterized the national discovery proceedings over the past two years. But there is another less dramatic and less tumultuous accounting that is owed the American people, one that needn't shatter our new-found tranquility or skew the orderly conduct of our other public affairs. It is a full accounting of what happened, in a way that would define the nature and the true dimensions of the damage that was done or threatened to our fundamental institutions. How else can we learn from Watergate what we need to know if we are to derive from it a measure of protection against similar abuses of presidential power in the future?

We are asking a lot of questions here today. Frankly, we do not have any ready answers. And we would judge from the anguishing in Congress and elsewhere over grants of immunity and presidential pardons that few others profess to have the answers at this point either. That may be just as well. For we have been through a lot in the past six days, not to mention the past two years, and a brief pause for reflection may improve the general perspective. But there is an important point to be made right now: judicial and investigative processes still at work, and some that may yet be instigated in the future, will require us to return to the unfinished business of Watergate. These matters are going to have to be dealt with. Eventually it is going to be largely Gerald Ford's unhappy responsibility to find the right combination of wisdom, fairness and fidelity to the law.

David B. Wilson

The Nixon Record — In Perspective

The paradox is grim and poignant. Richard M. Nixon, the "tricky Dick" of legend and, finally, fact, the super-politician, architect of the New Republican Majority, manipulative, prescient, awesome in his footwork, blasted out of the White House by the consequences of a politician's moral insensitivity and an incompetence at managing his own affairs.

And Richard M. Nixon, one-time Red-hunter and Soviet-baiter, supposed warmonger and arch-reactionary, whose presidency must objectively be evaluated as one of noble and humane achievements against near-insuperable odds. That the odds included an almost undisguised hatred from the taste makers and mind molders of most of influential journalism ought not to be forgotten.

Mr. Wilson is a columnist with the Boston Globe, from which this article is reprinted.

The year 1968, in which Mr. Nixon came to power, may have been the nadir of American life in this century. It was the year of Tet, of the Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations, of the Columbia University revolt, of the Chicago Democratic Convention, of disorder, demoralization and fear. The United States was entrapped in an undeclared war of ghastly slaughter, threatening to consume itself in self-hatred.

can relations with the Arab states and influence in the strategically oil-bearing countries have been strengthened and improved.

Perhaps Richard Nixon's personal initiatives in opening the door to China and virtually ending hostility between the Soviet Union and the United States will not survive his present disgrace, but no duty falls more urgently and immediately upon his successor than their preservation and cultivation.

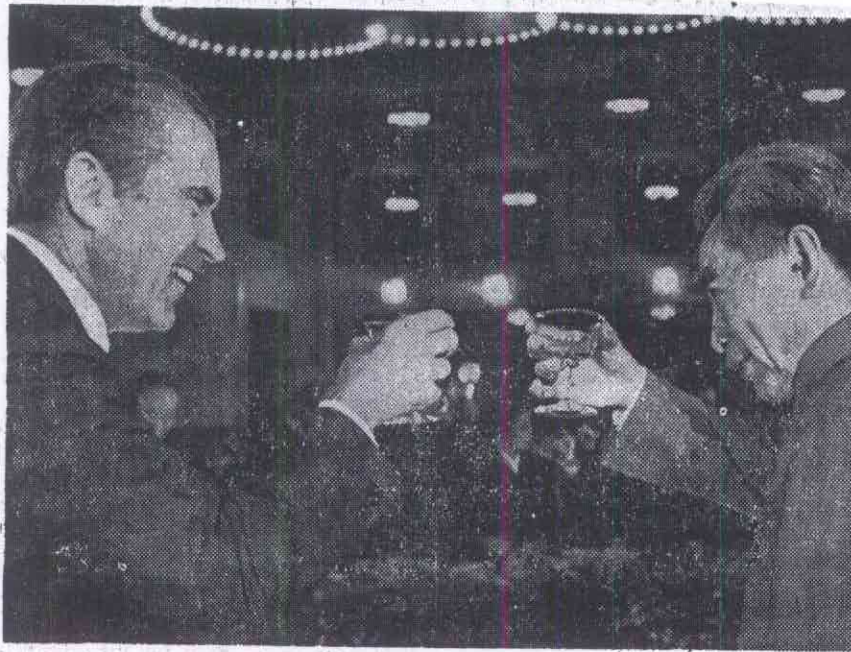
His was the administration in which an American walked on the moon, in which Amtrak was born and nurtured, in which the federal government finally acknowledged the urgency of funding mass public transportation. And if these long-awaited developments were not Nixon-authored, they did occur with his support in his presidency.

Inflation is cruel to the poor and destructive to the aspirations of the not-so-poor. But it is less severe here than in other industrialized countries.

Revenue sharing is a fact in being, not a scheme in abeyance.

There has been a slowdown in the growth of the federal government's power to coerce and control the lives of individuals and communities and a recognition, backed by the President's historic election victory of 1972, that most problems and decisions are better encountered and decided at the state and local levels than by distant policymakers in Washington.

Nationally, at least, with the Detroit decision of the Supreme Court, the tide of coercive school integration has



It is reasonable to assume that, then and now, the American people wanted an end to the war without surrender, an end to (archaic phrase!) the "cold war," the restoration of domestic tranquility, and end to the bloody over-extension of American power, a reversal of the tide of permissiveness, and a curtailment of the wasteful, discredited excesses of the assassination-panic-born Great Society.

This was Richard Nixon's mandate, and, to a far greater degree than is generally perceived after two years of Watergate drumfire, Richard Nixon delivered. And, where he failed, he certainly did not fail to try.

For the United States, the Vietnam war is over. The prisoners are home. Hanoi does not yet control the Mekong Delta. The Americans did not cut and run, did not desert an ally, do not today stand self-convicted of betrayal and cowardice before the world.

The draft is ended. A volunteer army, still controversial, is meeting its enlistment quotas and functioning.

The state of Israel twice has been saved by American power from being overrun, and, at the same time, Ameri-

been slowed and perhaps even turned.

Federal outlays for medical care for the poor, standards of income maintenance for the elderly, the disabled, blind and destitute, Social Security pensions, the whole category of income redistribution toward relieving distress and alleviating inequality have grown faster under Richard Nixon than they did under any other President. This is true to the point where redistribution of income, this year, is a larger percentage, for the first time, of federal expenditure than defense, space, and foreign affairs combined.

This is the record. It is not flawless. Not everything in it is Richard Nixon's alone, and some of it may not be his at all. It is nevertheless a factual record of what has been done in his administration and one for which a President elected with Mr. Nixon's 1968 mandate, endorsed overwhelmingly in 1972, need not apologize, and in which such a President can often take great pride.

Not all of it, and probably not most of it, will be lost at his departure, and that, now, must be this strange, defeated, private man's consolation.

David S. Broder

The 'Nixon People'

This has been a grim week for many people in Washington, but particularly for those men and women who worked in Richard Nixon's White House during the past five years.

Some were still there on Monday, when the President belatedly admitted that he had kept from them, and from his lawyers and from his congressional defenders and from the American people, the full truth about his involvement in the Watergate cover-up. These men and women looked ruin in the face right along with him, and felt the added pain of betrayal.

Others were working elsewhere—some of them having left the President's service by their own choice and some of them having been driven out by others who, in their arrogance, had convinced Mr. Nixon that the exiles were not "team players" by the peculiar standards of fitness those formerly mighty presidential aides chose to define.

Wherever they were and however they had come there, last week these men and women shared a common burden—the knowledge that for the rest of their lives, they would always be identified as "Nixon people."

For them, there is a special irony in the title of Carl Bernstein's and Bob Woodward's fine best-seller about the Watergate case, "All the President's Men." They know—if no one else does—that it was only a handful of the President's men and none of the President's women who were responsible for the scheme that brought their administration to ruin.

And they know, with a special poignance that no outsider can fully share that it need not have been.

"What I still can't understand," said a presidential aide seated in a West Wing office at mid-week, "was how such stupidity and such superb accomplishment could exist side by side for so long."

Those who were still working for Mr. Nixon this week, when the roof caved in on their last hopes that the evidence might somehow exonerate him, face problems in the future as difficult as the task of rationalizing the past. "Face it," one of them said, "this address is not exactly the best refer-

ence to give your prospective employer."

But those who covered the White House during the years of Richard Nixon know that there was as much devotion and dedication to public service in that building as there has been in past administrations. And the historical record would be more than incomplete—it would be grossly distorted—if those guilty of the grossest arrogance and abuse of power in the Nixon White House were allowed to stain the reputations of those who set a far different standard for themselves.

Any reporter who worked there could do what I have done just these past few minutes: jot down on a piece of paper the names of those he admires for their work for Mr. Nixon and the country.

The problem is that any list is partial and prejudiced—and there is a danger that those omitted may be damaged unwittingly by the implication that somehow they are less deserving of praise. But let me take that risk and enter the blanket disclaimer that those mentioned here are exemplars of many more who served their country well in the Nixon White House.

One thinks of those like Bob Ellsworth and John Sears, who joined the Nixon cause in the mid-1960s, when there were more risks than rewards in doing so, and were rewarded for their loyalty by being exiled early from the White House by men who were not their moral or intellectual peers.

One thinks of Bryce Harlow and Mel Laird and Herb Klein and Bob Finch and John Davies and Jim Keogh and John Whitaker, friends and associates of Mr. Nixon long before his White House days, who somehow were elbowed away from influence in the Oval Office.

One thinks of the congressional liaison staff, of Bill Timmons and Ken Belieu, and Dick Cook and Gene Cowen, of Bill Gifford and Max Friedersdorf and Tom Korolggos, men who earned the respect of the lawmakers with whom they worked, despite their constant uphill battle for recognition within their organization.

One thinks of the domestic policy staffs from Pat Moynihan and Steve Hess and John Price through Ken Cole and Ed Harper and Lew Engman.

One thinks of the writers, like Lee Huebner and Ray Price, and the lawyers, like Len Garment and Fred Buzhardt, and of politicians, like Harry Dent and Bill Baroody and Jerry Jones and Anne Armstrong—who put in every bit of their effort and ability, but did not park their consciences at the door.

One thinks of Jerry Warren, suffering with few complaints in the no-man's-land of the war between the press corps and the President, but unfailingly courteous and patient in his own dealings.

He and many others not mentioned here deserved far better than they got. They worked their hearts out for the President, and it is sympathy—not a stigma—they are entitled to now.