



It's King Richard On Capitol Hill

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THEY'RE CALLING him King Richard on Capitol Hill, and, given Mr. Nixon's new emphasis on executive prerogative, you can't say he didn't earn the title.

The most striking mark of change in the President's behavior is his new attitude towards the outward forms of government. During the early days of his presidency, every foreign policy problem had its day in the National Security Council. A high-level domestic council was set up to give internal problems similar innings. There was a game plan for the economy. For Vietnam, there was the Nixon doctrine.

Now Mr. Nixon has given these appearances of due process a mighty kick. He undertook the murder-bombing of North Vietnam without even consulting the military chiefs. The recent radical dismantling of mandatory controls — a very tricky matter — was done without notification of leading cabinet members.

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THE PRESIDENT has repeatedly indicated that he expects to absent himself some from contacts with the press and the public.

Another sign of the times is the attitude towards the Congress. Mr. Nixon has gone way beyond past precedent in refusing to spend duly authorized funds and in using executive privilege to prevent testimony to Congress by administration officials. A sign of how fast and loose he has played with tradition emerges in the matter of appointments in the foreign policy field.

If only to smooth confirmation, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is almost always given ad-

vance notice of such appointments. But this year the committee chairman and members had to read in the press about the nominations of John Scali to be Ambassador to the United Nations; of Kenneth Rush and William Casey to be Under Secretaries of State; of William Porter to be Deputy Under Secretary; of John Volpe to be Ambassador to Rome.

Perhaps the most telltale sign comes with the reorganization of the government. No one here imagines that the government is going to be changed by the designation of super-secretaries to run various departments.

What is significant about the reorganization is that it restricts the number of people with the color of a claim to access to the President's office. Mr. Nixon will be able to conduct his business with a minimum of face-to-face encounters.

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THE GREAT THING Mr. Nixon has in mind has never been in doubt. He wants to undo the Washington base of the Democratic Party with its concern for the urban poor and its bias towards the elite style of the northern cities.

I think the President is holding himself aloof because he senses that contact with the Congress, and the press and the public, compromises that grand design, muddies the clear picture he has in his head. I think he is probably right in that perception. So I believe that the shape and style of government in America, and the preservation of cherished values, now hinges on the efforts of the Congress and the press to bring Mr. Nixon back to the give-and-take of normal American politics.