

Gerald Ford, As President

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WHAT KIND OF President would Gerald Ford make? This is a question we are often asked, as the impeachment of President Nixon becomes more likely.

Ford would not be the brightest President to occupy the Oval Office, but he would be one of the most decent. There is nothing suave or subtle about him. He would bring an openness and a guilelessness to the White House. He could be trusted.

He would not have as keen a grasp of the paperwork of the presidency as Richard Nixon has. But probably more important, Ford would have a better feel for the human undercurrents.

There is also an all-American quality about him. He has the common touch of Harry Truman, the easy manner and engaging sincerity of Dwight Eisenhower.

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UNDER Gerald Ford, the Oval Office would no longer be a storm cellar where the President is constantly engaged in plotting strategy to strike back at innumerable "enemies."

When an aide brought Ford the first news that the White House kept an "enemies list," Ford shook his head in disbelief, "If you have so many enemies you have to keep a list," he remarked, "you are in trouble."

He would bring integrity to the White House. He has always refused to accept cash campaign contributions. He has in-

sisted upon checks, which can be properly recorded.

He would be a partisan President, who would attend to his political chores. But he would be able to work in harness with Democratic leaders. As House Republican leader, he had a close working relationship with the Democrats, particularly Speakers John McCormack and Carl Albert.

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WATERGATE politics have put Ford in a squeeze. He gave President Nixon a pledge of loyalty before accepting the vice presidency. But he also promised party leaders that he would spearhead the campaign for Republican candidates this year. They needed a leader whom Republicans could rally around. For the President has become a millstone around the neck of the GOP.

Ford, true to his pledge of loyalty, has tried to defend the President. Yet, at the same time, he has sought to divorce the party from Watergate.

The President, according to our White House sources, has suggested to Ford that he tone down his criticism of the way the White House has handled Watergate. The Vice President, in response, has tried to support the President, without completely swallowing the White House line.

Gerald Ford would not be a spectacular President. His style would be Grand Rapids, not Camelot. But he has the warm attributes, which would allow him to sit comfortably on the cold pedestal of power.