

## President Nixon

# He Is Hated For His Virtues

Full column filed Watergate

By Ernest Van Den Haag

**S**UPPOSE MR. NIXON were guilty of everything he is accused of: Money was collected illegally from corporations which expected favors in return. He encouraged assistants to find out who "leaked" government secrets, or to improve his electoral fortunes, by committing burglaries, tapping wires, preparing silly "enemy lists" or trying to get the I.R.S. to audit the tax returns of "enemies."



Suppose that Mr. Nixon tried afterwards to sweep these things under the rug. And that, contrary to promises, he fired a prosecutor who became too inconvenient and that some fought-over tapes disappeared. Finally, suppose he borrowed money to buy residences in California and Florida, made profits and found ways to reduce his tax liability, and to have excessive public funds spent for his residences.

Some of these accusations involve no wrongdoing; others seem trivial; many seem plausible; none have been proven. But suppose they were true. Should they determine our judgment of his presidency?

Mr. Nixon got us out of Vietnam, without delivering Saigon to Hanoi. He balanced the superpowers so that the danger of attack on the U.S., or of further Chinese or Soviet military expansion, is now remote, whereupon he could save Israel without sending a single soldier.

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**S**OME SOURCES OF Nixon hate are impersonal. They produced no less for Senator Goldwater, depicted as a madman about to start an atomic holocaust and rob the people of social security in the bargain. The country has been run by liberals. Their establishment was threatened for the first time in a generation when Goldwater and then Nixon became candidates. Liberals still dominate the judiciary, the universities, the federal bureaucracy and the media.

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**B**UT MUCH OF THE HATE for Nixon is personal and self-serving. The American left could no more believe in Alger Hiss' guilt than the French right could in Captain Dreyfus' innocence. If Hiss is guilty, the liberals who promoted him and his allies, and refused to investigate, are not blameless. Chambers indeed risked his life and Nixon his career to root out Hiss and friends. Watergate now is used to redeem Hiss, and Senator McGovern, and the liberal sponsorship of both.

What does Watergate prove? That Nixon has defects? Nixon is not hated because of his many defects, or mistakes, or misjudgments. He is hated, hated profoundly, and feared, for what he has accomplished, for his virtues rather than his vices.

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