

From editorial:

The Constitution of the United States is the American peoples' most precious asset. It is also extraordinarily vulnerable, at least to persistent and calculated attack. It is not a self-enforcing document, and most Americans have only the vaguest notions of its contents and its protections. What they do know, however, is both basic and correct: that the Constitution contains the rules of the American game. Over the past three and a half years, Richard Nixon has attempted with a certain unhappy consistency to change the rules of the game and in ways that have done great harm to the country. So while in ordinary elections, the candidate's approach to constitutional values does not become an issue, we would argue that this year the administration's record has made concern for these values central to the choice confronting the electorate.

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We ... maintain that this tampering with the rules of the game, with the basic concepts of American justice puts the rights and well being of every American - whatever his political views - in danger. The assault on justice we have in mind has been twofold: It has encompassed, first, an assault on the freedoms of ordinary citizens outside the administration's privileged circle, and, second, an assault on the traditional concept of the processes of justice as being equally applicable to all.

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The one area where the Nixon administration has been scrupulous, not to say indulgent, on the matter of constitutional protections and rights is that concerning wrongdoing of which its own members and associates have been accused. This sudden concern for the rights of the accused (in the Watergate trial), the right of privacy (in the Common Cause case seeking to open the lists of contributors to Mr. Nixon's campaign) and the rest, must strike the observer as cynical in the extreme and - beyond that - as evidence of the way in which the Nixon administration has bent the rules to serve its own immediate ends. For there can be no disputing that a

double standard concerning the requirements of law and order is alive and well in Richard Nixon's Washington where, at the moment, those accused of a variety of political malpractices are blithely investigating themselves and announcing the happy news that they don't find all that much to worry about.

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