

Joe Sikspak Demands a Scandal



Arthur Hoppe

DEAR PRESIDENT: I, Joe Sikspak, American, take pen in hand to stick a finger in your pie. What you need right quick is another good scandal.

I got the idea down at Paddy's Place where I am having a Seven-high to forget my worries. "What worries me most," I tell Paddy, "is that I can't remember what I'm supposed to be worrying about."

"This week, Joe, it's the energy crisis," says Paddy. "Last week it was the Middle East showdown with the Russians. Last month it was high prices. And in between it was White House scandals. The President is counting on every loyal American to worry about the right thing at the right time."

"Well, I did okay by high prices," says I. "Come to think about it, I haven't given them a thought for weeks. But I admit I never did worry much about that Russian showdown. I figured it was just a cover-up for the scandals."

"That's where you're wrong, Joe," says Paddy. "It was the other way around. The scandals were a cover-up for the Middle East."

"Give me another, Paddy, and tell me about it," says I.

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"IT'S LIKE THIS," begins Paddy. "A month ago, the President calls in his trusty adviser, General Haig. 'General,' he says, 'my fellow Americans are going to have my scalp over high prices. What should I do?'"

"When under attack by the enemy," says the General, waving his sword, 'create a diversion!'"

"Good thinking," says the President. "Now what would take the minds of my

fellow Americans off high prices? By golly, I've got it! Kindly leak word to the press, General, that my beloved and devoted associate Spiro, is a crook. And toss in for good measure that I've been cutting a few corners out in San Clemente myself."

"Well, it worked like a charm. Overnight, nobody's worrying about what the President's going to do about high prices. They're too busy worrying about whether he's a crook. Then the Middle East crisis hits."

"General," says the President, "at the risk of starting World War III, I alerted a couple of million soldiers to deal with a couple of thousand Russkies. My fellow Americans are going to hang me by the thumbs."

"When under attack by the enemy," says the General, "use tried and true measures."

"Good thinking," says the President. "Kindly go fire Archie Cox and on your way toss these two tapes in the Potomac."

"Which works. Only some folks are still worried about World War III. And the President, wishing, as always, to take our minds off our worries, asks us please to worry about the energy crisis instead."

"Will things get worse, Paddy?" says I. "If the President lucks out, Joe," says Paddy, nodding, "they will."

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SO INSTEAD of an energy crisis, President, I wish you'd come up with another scandal instead. Paddy figures you've run out of them. But not me. I've got faith in you.

Truly yours,
Joe Sikspak, American