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'A Man of the Highest Personal Integrity'

By BARRY M. GOLDWATER

WASHINGTON—Liberal opponents of Supreme Court nominee William H. Rehnquist will never find a more difficult target.

Almost a week of hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee plus thousands of hours spent searching out a lifetime of records and comments by the Phoenix attorney have left nothing to object to except Mr. Rehnquist's political views.

It is estimated that never before have so many journalists, academicians, legal experts and others spent so much time on the qualifications of one nominee.

And what emerges from the thousands of words, voiced and written, about Mr. Rehnquist are these salient facts:

Mr. Rehnquist is a man of the highest personal integrity and professional competence.

Mr. Rehnquist is a man who takes the trouble to see both sides of all issues to which he addresses himself. Mr. Rehnquist is a man who has demonstrated himself to be thoughtful

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and moderate; a man whose beliefs and convictions are well within the mainstream of this country's thinking.

Perhaps one of the greatest pluses for Mr. Rehnquist which emerged from a nonstop inquisition by liberal politicians, commentators and journalists was his ability to maintain his poise and temper under the most extreme and trying circumstances.

He has proven to friends and critics alike that he wears pressure well, and is a man of such breadth and balance that his severest critics were hard put to find even short passages of his past statements to quote out of context.

It would be unfair to say that the Phoenix attorney is a man devoid of political and social convictions. As an acquaintance of many years, I know him to be a man who believes that the protection of individual rights should extend not only to the accused but also to society as a whole. He perhaps could fairly be described as a man

who believes in a system based on ordered justice, who is deeply concerned about threats to our democratic processes.

Some, but by no means all, of Mr. Rehnquist's opponents have lately begun to use smear tactics in an effort to prevent his confirmation. The tactics by now have included exaggerations of his views, outright distortions of his public statements, plus a considerable variety of vicious labels and characterizations. It may be a measure of desperation, but the fact remains that now that the committee questioning has failed to destroy Mr. Rehnquist's chances, he is being called a "right-wing zealot," a "radical of the right," a "jaunty McCartyite" and an "extremist in favor of executive supremacy and diminution of personal freedom."

In my opinion, the opponents of Mr. Rehnquist overstepped themselves and defeated their own purpose when

they seized on a casual talk-show claim that the President's nominee was a member of the John Birch Society. Almost as soon as the charge hit the airwaves, the nominee filed a sworn statement with the Judiciary Committee denying that he was now or had ever been a member of the Birch Society. Unfair as the charge was, the effort of the A.D.A. leader, Joseph Rauh, to use it for smear purposes may have tipped the Senatorial scales in Mr. Rehnquist's behalf.

Rauh's attempt to cast doubt on Mr. Rehnquist's denial of membership and his obvious attempt to smear the nominee through a process of guilt by association blew up right in his face. It brought from Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, a committee member with admitted reservations about the nominee, a warning not to spread charges without evidence. Kennedy further told Rauh: "You have left an atmosphere that I think is rather poisonous."

Senator Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, is a long-time friend of William H. Rehnquist.