

Those Rumbblings on Mr. Nixon's



By JOHN M. ASHBROOK

WASHINGTON—In early 1968, when it appeared that the Ohio delegation to the Republican National Convention would not go for Richard Nixon, I opposed the organization slate and was elected as a free and independent delegate. At Miami, candidate Nixon received two Ohio votes, mine and the other district delegate who was elected on my independent slate.

I did this on the basis of Mr. Nixon's record: a soundly conservative Republican in the Congress, in the Vice Presidency and thereafter on the campaign trail in 1960, and through 1967. Above all, I voted for him on the basis of what he said in 1968.

He said that we have to stop the

insanity of huge Federal deficits which fueled inflation and thereby picked the pockets of every American who owned so much as a dollar. He warned against the dangers of an increasingly regimented economy. He pledged to bring the Federal bureaucracy to an accountability that was long past due. He spoke out for more individual initiative in the old American style. He cautioned us to be on our guard against the seductive idea that there never had been a cold war, or that, at any rate, it was now over. He called for military superiority and strategic weapons with which to defend America from the growing might of the Soviet Union.

And he was absolutely right.

Today, three years later, where do we stand? The President has fulfilled his promise to appoint judicial conservatives to the Supreme Court and to pass new anticrime legislation. His Indochina policies, at least thus far, have represented a commendable effort to fulfill our obligations to our allies. But the list pretty well ends there.

President Nixon's budget for fiscal year 1972 will probably produce a deficit in the neighborhood of \$30-billion, one of the largest in American history. Its inflationary effect will be temporarily concealed by a vast spaghetti-like tangle with wage and price regulations impossible to understand, let alone administer. Despite

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which, this former enthusiast for individual initiative has called for enactment of a vast family assistance plan (F.A.P.) that would more than double the nation's welfare rolls via a guaranteed income scheme.

Abroad, President Nixon has led the triumphant charge of the Red Chinese into the U.N. and seen our ally of thirty years standing, Nationalist China, cynically expelled while we stood by and did effectively nothing. And, most disturbingly, he has watched America's military posture shrink inexorably from superiority to "sufficiency" to a point where stark, irretrievable inferiority is no more than a year or two away.

Maybe, though I doubt it, that is what the American people want. But it certainly isn't what I voted for in Miami Beach in August, 1968, nor is it the platform that Richard Nixon ran on that year. I can't help feeling that a lot of Americans and a lot of New Hampshire Republicans, for example, would welcome the opportunity to remind Richard Nixon of that platform and of the solemn promises he made during the campaign and of the very deep concerns of the people who put him in the White House in the first place.

What if we had told the public in 1968 that we would promote record domestic spending programs, continue our defense deterioration and promote a guaranteed income? Or if candidate Nixon had said, "I am now a Keynesian"? I feel the voters would have stuck to the party with real expertise in these areas, the Democratic party. We offered change and it was to be in the conservative direction. We were elected on that basis.

These three years have been particularly agonizing for conservatives like myself who stood in the breach in 1968 and told those voters of our philosophy that George Wallace was wrong—there was a dime's worth of difference between the parties and a Nixon Administration would effectuate the changes they sought. For the most part, what changes we have seen have been unwanted changes such as F.A.P. and the Red China fiasco.

Now, American conservatives must ask themselves not what their role will be in the 1972 Presidential election, but whether under present circumstances they will have any role at all. It has come down to just that. This is why there is genuine rumbling on the American right.

John M. Ashbrook, a Republican Congressman from Ohio, has been mentioned as a possible conservative candidate for the Presidency.