

NYTimes A Nation Unready for Le Grand

By John Brademas

WASHINGTON — When President Nixon tries to pass himself off as an American Disraeli, do not be beguiled. It's Charles de Gaulle, with his supreme contempt for the legislative branch of government, whom Mr. Nixon really admires.

The President's vetoes of bills unanimously passed by bipartisan majorities, his impounding of appropriated funds, his attempts to create super-departments by Executive fiat rather than legislation—all these actions make obvious Mr. Nixon's intention to spurn any Congressional olive branches that may be offered him.

But if the President is feeling feisty after his impressive victory, he should take care, for the 93d Congress promises to be one of the most active and assertive in years.

Here are some of the reasons for expecting a resurgent Congress in 1973 and '74.

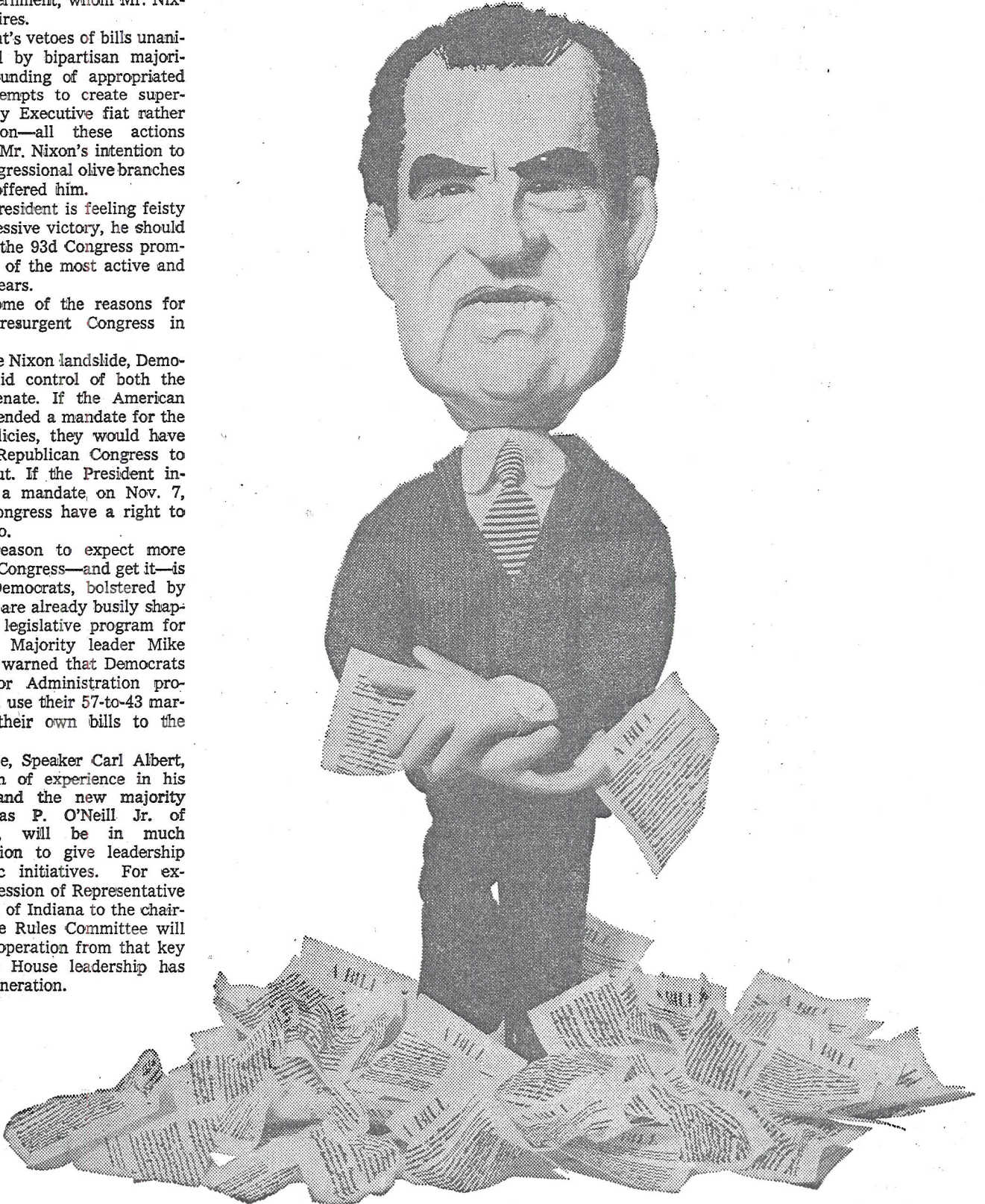
●Despite the Nixon landslide, Democrats kept solid control of both the House and Senate. If the American people had intended a mandate for the President's policies, they would have given him a Republican Congress to carry them out. If the President insists he won a mandate, on Nov. 7, then we in Congress have a right to say we did too.

●Another reason to expect more from the next Congress—and get it—is that Senate Democrats, bolstered by two additions, are already busily shaping their own legislative program for early action. Majority leader Mike Mansfield has warned that Democrats won't wait for Administration proposals but will use their 57-to-43 margin to send their own bills to the floor.

In the House, Speaker Carl Albert, with one term of experience in his high office, and the new majority leader, Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts, will be in much stronger position to give leadership on Democratic initiatives. For example, the accession of Representative J. Ray Madden of Indiana to the chairmanship of the Rules Committee will mean more cooperation from that key unit than the House leadership has known in a generation.

In addition, the absence from the new House—because of death, defeat, resignation or retirement—of six committee chairmen and six of the top ranking Republicans on committees will, in several cases, produce more constructive, aggressive leadership than their predecessors gave.

●There is a third reason to anticipate a resurgent Congress in the next two years. Not only most Democrats but also a number of Republican Senators and Congressmen oppose the Administration's attempts to centralize executive powers in the White House staff, the impounding of funds, the



Richard

attacks on press and threats to television, the still unexplained Watergate campaign tactics.

All these are reasons the voters did not give Mr. Nixon a compliant Congress; they are also among the reasons it won't be compliant.

Senator Sam Ervin of North Carolina and Representative Chet Holifield of California, chairmen of the Government Operations Committee, will fight the effort to establish super-departments run by Presidential assistants who, when Congress tries to question them, plead executive privilege and immunity from public accountability.

The President's refusal to spend money Congress voted to meet urgent problems is already being challenged in the courts and will bring a constitutional confrontation with Congress as well.

And many Republicans in Congress, peeved that President Nixon failed either to speak for them or share his copious campaign funds, also feel their Democratic colleagues' resentment that he waited till Congress adjourned before vetoing bills, some passed unanimously, to help older Americans, the severely disabled and flood victims.

With no opportunity in late October to override the vetoes, Congress will act swiftly to approve these measures.

Nor will the Administration's threat to hold local television stations accountable for reporting to the Government on the content of network news contribute to improving relations with Congress.

Nor, it seems safe to add, will Mr. Nixon be helped on the Hill by his failure to bring peace in Vietnam and his renewal of the bombing.

The 93d Congress—as its Democratic leaders in both the House and Senate have made perfectly clear—will cooperate with President Nixon in the interest of the nation. But neither Congress nor the American people are ready for Le Grand Richard in the White House or to change the name of Camp David to Colombey-les-deux-Eglises.

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Sculpture by Stanley Glaubach
