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Mr. Nixon in the Mirror

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WASHINGTON—The most interesting thing about President Nixon is that he regards himself as a genuine but practical pacifist who is slowly building a world which may never see another war. He attributes this urge to his maternal Quaker but he views his approach as necessarily pragmatic, cautious and based upon wide international experience.

For him there are two quintessential problems: how peace can be achieved and how it can be preserved. But he insists it isn't enough just to be for peace; one must also do something about it. In his own effort to "do something" he considers himself hampered by oppositional extremes he labels as superdoves and superhawks.

He is in fact just as much of a One World advocate as was Wendell Willkie or, one might add, Lyndon Johnson. Furthermore he obviously considers it ridiculous to think that the United States can escape its inherited responsibilities.

Therefore he opposes both the right-wing and left-wing advocates of what he sees as neo-isolationism. He doesn't think a fortress America (for him, the aim of the superhawks) could exist as a reality. And he doesn't think a benevolent, weak America, relying not on its ultimate defense abilities but on the goodwill of others, could endure.

He insists not only that he intends to end the Vietnam war but that he is already engaged in doing just that. For him, he says sadly, the hardest

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task is awarding posthumous medals of honor. He professes the highest possible regard for peace—not just for today but for tomorrow and the indefinite future. But, he underscores, this is an immensely difficult process and virtually all corners of the world are in one or another way involved.

Another interesting aspect of the President when he talks in relaxed fashion is his evident populist feeling. He cherishes deep mistrust for the Establishment, comparable, perhaps, to his predecessor's mistrust for "East Coast liberals."

Although Nixon is obviously sad to find among his bitterest political enemies today some of those who were in the forefront of American internationalism after World War II, he trusts the judgment of the common man. He feels the instinctual beliefs of the people at large will sustain him in applying a program often savagely attacked by Establishment leaders.

It is quite fascinating to observe his introspective efforts to link the cautious pragmatism of his fairly tough current approach with memories of his boyhood. Somewhat sadly he says: "The kind of relative peace I envision is not the dream of my Quaker youth. But it is realistic."

As he describes it the big question he faces is: "Will our Establishment and our people meet their responsi-

bilities?" He insists he will meet his own: not only terminating the Indochina war in such a way that South Vietnam has a realistic chance of surviving; but maintaining a sufficient military posture to keep the world in balance while negotiations gradually wind down tensions.

Everyone knows the President is an expert politician. Nevertheless, he takes pains to stress that the fundamental program he now pursues is not dictated by political reasons but by the long-range national interest.

Nevertheless, he clearly relishes the thought that some of those now vying for next year's Democratic nomination indicate they will make Vietnam a major issue. For Nixon it is folly to develop an issue for the voters which is going to be a non-issue by the time they vote—and it is his full intention that this shall be the case.

Thus it is obvious from conversations such as the writer has had more than once with the President that when he looks in the mirror he sees a different Nixon from the image so often hammered by political opponents, editorial writers and cartoonists. For them he is a right-wing war-monger, a brinksman *par excellence* who ignores pressing social problems of a schizophrenic and tormented nation.

But the Nixon seen by the President himself is a pragmatic Quaker who not only wants peace but is patient enough to do something about it in a realistic way, even if it takes a long time during which he has to experience the "vicious crossfire" of those who disagree with his policies.