

# Master of Republicans for 1972

Richard Milhous Nixon

By ROBERT B. SEMPLE Jr.

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MIAMI BEACH, Aug. 22—The Richard Milhous Nixon who came here tonight to press his claims for a second term finds himself in far different and more promising circumstances than the driven and often uncertain figure who set forth from this same convention hall four years ago to recapture the White House for the Republican party. For one thing, he is older. Fifty-nine years have elapsed since his birth Jan. 9, 1913, in the little farming community of Yorba Linda near Los Angeles.

His hair is a bit grayer, and his face is a bit rounder and softer; he has acquired two sons-in-law and handsome houses in Key Biscayne, Fla., and San Clemente, Calif.

Politically, he has won the affection of his allies and at least the respect of much of the electorate. A conservative domestic policy, a series of imaginative strokes in foreign policy and the misfortunes and mishaps of his opponents have made him the indisputable master of his own party and won converts among members of the old Democratic coalition.

## The Essential Nixon

But the question whether four years in the White House have left important marks on the essential Nixon—his personality, style, instincts and views—is less easily answered.

Even now, many believe, he remains the most elusive and reclusive of modern Presidents. He gives few private interviews, and there are some members of the White House press corps who have yet to shake hands with him.

And though he is known to his staff as a generous man given to small favors and kindnesses, his public appearances—and his use of television is regarded as more adroit than that of any other President—reveal little of the private man. He does not, in short, inspire anecdotal material.

His friends and particularly his loyal associates in the White House insist that important changes have occurred. They say they find him more confident in his policies and comfortable in his job, a transformation they trace from mid-1971, when Mr. Nixon, then in the political doldrums, restored the momentum of his Administration and captured the attention of the country with his economic turnabout and the announcement of his trip to China.



United Press International

Public appearances reveal little of the private man  
(Mr. Nixon at the Republican convention in 1968)

## Many Surprises

Some of these same aides also delight in recalling, for the benefit of skeptical newsmen, Mr. Nixon's many surprises, notably his imposition of wage-price restraints and his overtures to the Communist world.

These and other maneuvers, they argue, attest to the President's capacity to devise and act on new strategies, and they thus require reassessment of his image as a classical free-enterpriser and devout anti-Communist.

But there is evidence in his own style and in his programs and policies that Mr. Nixon's instincts and beliefs have changed little and that he remains, in domestic policy, a conservative; in international policy, a believer in a major world role for the United States, and in his personal approach to the electorate, a man who is less comfortable on the stump than in the board room.

One of Mr. Nixon's more revealing insights about himself came in a response to a question by Dan Rather of the Columbia Broadcasting System, who asked during a television interview last January why many people thought the President "failed to inspire confidence and faith and lacked personal warmth and compassion."

## Nixon's Strong Suit

Mr. Nixon replied:

"My strong point is not rhetoric; it isn't showmanship; it isn't big promises—those things that create the glamour and the excitement that people call charisma and warmth.

"My strong point, if I have a strong point, is performance. I always do more than I say. I always produce more than I promise."

The question was a hard one, and Mr. Nixon responded by changing the terms in which it had been put. He had been asked about confidence, warmth and compassion; he chose instead to talk about showmanship, glamour, excitement and charisma.

What made the answer revealing was Mr. Nixon's tacit acknowledgment that he did not regard himself as a particularly inspirational figure and that, lacking that capacity, he preferred to win the respect of his followers through deeds rather than arouse their passion through style.

"If I do win this election," he said on C.B.S. television to Mike Wallace in October,

1968, "I think I will conduct the Presidency in a way that I will command the respect of the American people. That may not be the style of some of my predecessors, but it will enable me to lead. Let me make this one point: Some public men are destined to be loved, and other public men are destined to be disliked, but the most important thing about a public man is not whether he's loved or disliked, but whether he's respected. So I hope to restore respect to the Presidency at all levels of my conduct."

From the outset, Mr. Nixon believed that one way to win respect was to conduct the business of the Presidency in a low-key manner consistent with his own inclinations and what he perceived to be a certain weariness on the part of the public with President Johnson's flamboyance.

Where Mr. Johnson had been occasionally brusque and often tempestuous at his news conferences, Mr. Nixon—on those few occasions when he held them—would try to be deferential.

Where Mr. Johnson asserted his powers into every nook and cranny of the bureaucracy, Mr. Nixon concerned himself with the large questions, principally those involving foreign policy, his first love, leaving the details of implementation to others.

In time, more fundamental differences emerged. Mr. Johnson drew his strength from the people, whom he longed to touch and hear; Mr. Nixon tended to place his faith in the executive machinery of Government.

Mr. Johnson reached beyond government to his friends for advice and self-renewal; Mr. Nixon sought nourishment within the system.



## Memorandums Preferred

Mr. Johnson loved the incessant chatter of his television console and long, face-to-face meetings with subordinates; Mr. Nixon reads his news in summary form and prefers the written memorandum.

In the Nixon White House, people and paper flow within concentric circles of privacy and security, and even in moments of stress there is no outward evidence of undue commotion. Mr. Johnson, by contrast, cast a long silhouette even when he was trying to hide.

Mr. Nixon's vaunted staff system has not always served him well. His associates, principally former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, discovered Judges Clement F. Haynsworth Jr. and G. Harrold Carswell, and it was only when they failed to win approval in the Senate that Mr. Nixon realized he might have looked them over himself.

But the staff system prevails, partly because it continues to satisfy his twin passions for order and solitude.

From time to time, Mr. Nixon has moved outside the White House to indulge in "rhetoric." But this has not proved to be his kind of theater.

## Conservative Philosophy

The repeated "historic firsts" that he announced for this or that accomplishment were viewed by many as monotonous. His celebration of the first landing on the moon as "the greatest week since the beginning of the world" struck some as impermissible hyperbole in spite of the excitement of the moment. His chat with demonstrators on the grounds of the Lincoln Memorial during the Cambodia-Kent State demonstrations in 1970 proved awkward to both sides.

There is little evidence that the basic elements of his philosophy have changed in four years. As Senator and Representative, Mr. Nixon had been a conservative on domestic policy and, in foreign policy, an internationalist with a strong sense of the nation's worldwide mission.

He took these beliefs with

him when he entered the White House and holds them now, despite tactical changes that have given the impression of fundamental change.

On domestic policy, for example, it is often argued that Mr. Nixon has co-opted the Republican left with his programs and the Republican right with his politics, notably his appointments to the Supreme Court and his reaffirmation of faith in Vice President Agnew.

But his programs do not seem to have been designed to appeal to the left. The "silent majority" (or forgotten American, or middle American) is still seen by Mr. Nixon and those around him as the dominant political force, and it is to this group that he has offered his attacks on the protesters and drug abuse, his bills on revenue sharing, his plans for reducing property taxes and helping parochial schools and, his strong opposition to school busing, on which he feels very strongly.

He has, of course, offered many more initiatives, some of which — such as ending the draft and designing new weapons against crime — have fared well, and some of which have fallen victim to the indifference or hostility of a Democratic Congress.

## Radical Alternatives

Yet he has never seemed happy with the radical alternative. His early interest in an income maintenance plan appears to have waned, and the one truly radical domestic move, the imposition of wage-price restraints, was practically forced upon him by the failure of other strategies and the rising discontent of even his own constituency over inflation and unemployment.

Mr. Nixon's deepest feelings about wage-price constraints may have been expressed after he was told by an aide, in 1969, that David M. Kennedy, then Secretary of the Treasury, had suggested publicly that the Administration might have to impose them.

"Controls. Oh, my God, no!" the aide quoted Mr. Nixon as saying. "I was a lawyer for the O.P.A. during the war, and I know all about controls. They mean rationing, black markets, inequitable administration. We'll never go for controls."

It is in foreign policy that Mr. Nixon has made his most dramatic maneuvers without fundamentally altering the views he brought to the Presidency.

His overtures to China and Moscow are light years distant from the policies of containment and confrontation espoused by John Foster Dulles, one of Mr. Nixon's early mentors in foreign affairs. But he told interviewers in 1968 that he hoped to achieve some rapprochement with Peking, and here in Miami four years ago he announced his determination to move from a posture of confrontation to one of conciliation.

As for Vietnam, Mr. Nixon, balancing his political instincts about the country's weariness with war with his desire to keep the country's honor and credibility intact, has withdrawn the combat troops while accelerating the bombing.

If all his public comments can be taken at face value, he continues to regard Vietnam as a test of the country's will.

If anything has changed in these last four years, it is the momentum of the Administration. After two years of uncertainty, marked by quarrels within his official family and ambiguous policies, events began to break his way. Long months of planning yielded his historic missions abroad and a domestic policy, notably his posture on busing, that seemed to catch the public temper.

In 1968, he came to Miami to attack his predecessor. He will leave this convention convinced that he has much to sell.