

On touring Washington last week with my family, I was very upset at my visit to the White House. This treasure and symbol of the American people was being treated as the private campaign base of Richard Nixon. The building, which belongs to all of the United States, is open to the public only 10 hours a week and even this limited period does not include the most convenient day, Sunday. Given these limited hours, a long wait was inevitable. Surely the citizenry deserves more consideration.

Even more distressing was the partisan and vulgar use made of this historic building. Throughout the public rooms are posters on advertising easels championing the events of the Nixon administration. The restrained elegance of the East Room is marred by an easel display of a Sammy Davis performance; the President's dinner with the returned POWs is repeatedly pictured. The message is no longer, "This is America's house," but "This is Richard Nixon's preserve."

In the light of the Watergate scandal, perhaps I should not be surprised at this confusion between the personality of Mr. Nixon and the office of the presidency. Still, it is sad that this corruption of mind and spirit is now affecting even the traditional symbols of the United States.

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