

Andrew Tully

Words of praise for (gosh) Nixon



WASHINGTON — Enough! One retches at the smug I-told-you-so's of the Kennedy-McGovern liberal elite concerning Richard Nixon's troubles. One yearns for a competent and articulate advocate of national stature willing to raise his voice in the President's behalf.

Watergate. Okay. The White House enemies' list? Sure. As the boss, Richard Nixon can't escape responsibility for stupid and vicious antics by little boys playing the politics of espionage.

But whence came the conclusion that Nixon has been a complete failure as a President? John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson should have been such flops.

Before they organize a lynching party, the Kennedy-McGovern vigilantes should be forced to read a little recent history. Perhaps they could start with a little noticed statistic: There were no airline hijackings in the United States in 1973. A minor achievement? Not so ruddy minor to people who have to do a lot of flying.

MORE IMPORTANT, it was a victory over one aspect of the violent scene Nixon inherited from his two recent predecessors. With campuses relatively tranquil, it seems only fair to remember that when Nixon took office numerous students spent much of their time blowing up

college libraries, seizing school buildings and assaulting campus speakers with whose views they disagreed.

Indeed, if it were not for Watergate and assorted iddies and oddsies of third-rate nastiness, the fair-minded within the opposition would be admitting that Richard Nixon already has achieved most of what he was elected to do.

THE PEOPLE were disgusted with the Vietnam war. Nixon ended it within a reasonable period of time and brought home all American prisoners. This did not set well with the Kennedy-McGovern clique, and as a professional cad I can't help wondering if it's because they believe it would have been more fitting had one of their own wound up a conflict ignited by a member of the club named John Kennedy.

Lyndon Johnson fanned it into a major war, of course, but it's not considered good taste to mention that, because although not a club member Johnson was unassailably a good Democrat.

Voters also were tired of the Cold War, not only because of its implicit dangers but because of its cost. Well, detente is not yet a fait accompli, but more cordial relations have been established with the Soviet Union and Communist China, lessening by at least a few

inches the outbreak of World War II.

As for those who call it Henry Kissinger's show, that bright man was recruited by Nixon to succeed where the Dean Rusk and Walt Rostows — and even the Bobby Kennedys — failed.

THE PEOPLE were tired of Big Government. Nixon has often succeeded in reducing its size, and its cost, a near-heroic task for a Republican President confronted with a Democratic Congress never noted for its frugality or its enthusiasm for local — and cheaper — government.

All these facts notwithstanding, it may be that a majority of the electorate favors a changing of the guard, by impeachment or Nixon's resignation. That would be understandable. But the I-told-you-so crowd should count no chickens. In the polls, the people are voting against the administration's sometime immorality, not for a return to the violent, if sometimes stylish, Sixties.

The opposition, in fact, may be hard up. Teddy Kennedy leads the pack of possible Democratic nominees at this early stage, a circumstance that hints of a death wish. How does a party run against Watergate with the ghost of Chappaquiddick lying in wait at every whistle stop?