

NYTimes  
On Treating the President Fairly

MAR 20 1974

To the Editor:

Philip C. Clarke's "Plea for Fairness to Mr. Nixon" (Op-Ed March 8) is a fascinating piece. It seems that a certain band of "liberals," the same one that "hounded Lyndon Johnson from office because of his commitment to the defense of South Vietnam," is the source of "the outcry over Watergate." For the outcry "resembles nothing so much as the baying of hounds, closing in for the kill of a wounded quarry." "So deep," continues Mr. Clarke, "so unrestrained is the hostility of the Nixon-haters that they would risk wrecking the Republic to destroy their man."

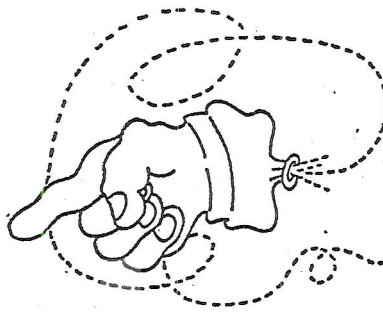
As an anti-Vietnam-war liberal of long standing, I nonetheless want to see Mr. Nixon treated fairly. The title of Mr. Clarke's column led me to expect the writer to demonstrate that the President had been treated unfairly. Perhaps by one of the Congressional committees, or one of the Watergate grand juries, or Judge Sirica, or Mr. Cox, or Mr. Jaworsky . . . or somebody. Instead, I learned that fairness can only be served through dropping the entire matter, including, of course, the impeachment investigation. Whereas for "Congress and the critics to continue pursuing Watergate and Richard Nixon to the bitter end" is, by implication, inherently unfair.

I think Mr. Clarke need not have told us about what people can be driven to by hatreds that are deep and unrestrained. The spirit of his article reveals the effects only too clearly.

STANLEY E. WEISBERGER  
Oneonta, N.Y., March 8, 1974

To the Editor:

"A Plea for Fairness to Mr. Nixon" is the finest and most sensible article I have read in over a year. It should be printed every day until the public



Bennett

is well aware of what is happening, as expressed in Mr. Clarke's last paragraph. We are all getting fed up with this Watergate business.

JOSEPH A. SACHS  
New York, March 8, 1974

To the Editor:

Philip Clarke's article makes a valid point in criticizing the "Nixon-haters" who seize upon such things as Watergate to "get" the President because they do not approve of his political policies. Impeachment is not a substitute for the election process, and to use it as such would be an abuse.

However, Mr. Clarke makes the same error in his defense of the President, citing with approval such things as China, Vietnam and the Soviet détente. If the President has committed impeachable offenses, approval of his policies is no more a valid defense against his impeachment than disapproval is a valid basis for supporting impeachment.

Whatever the outcome of the debate over what constitutes an impeachable offense, the issue is whether or not the President has committed such an offense. Agreement or disagreement on policy matters should have no bearing on the case, one way or the other.

EDWIN A. LANE  
Westport, Conn., March 8, 1974