

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Crime Against the President

Editor — There is a side of Watergate that is being ignored. While certain factions are wallowing in sordid minutia, the enormous crime goes virtually unmentioned.

That is the crime which has been perpetrated against our President — entrapment, blackmail, invasion of privacy.

It is a crime that, when viewed in perspective, makes the scandal over which there is so much ado pale in comparison. It is a crime, furthermore, against the American people, because while attempting to discredit the President while he is in office it drives a wedge between the people and their government: it decapitates the nation.

(If a President's alleged transgressions do not constitute a patent failure to perform the functions of government for which he is elected — but are instead in the private domain — prosecution should be deferred to the end of his term, when he can be arraigned as a private citizen, separate and distinct from his public function. Then all documents, tapes, and other evidence can be viewed, heard and considered in a logical, non-theatrical, and non-political way befitting a judicial investigation. And at a time, and in a manner, that will not jeopardize the very existence of the nation.)

The important question to which Watergate should address itself is: Who conceived, planned, funded, and was generally responsible for this crime of entrapment and blackmail? Who planted the double-agent? If one is to censure the President, then one cannot, without hypocrisy, ignore this far, far greater crime which has been perpetrated against him; but must pursue it too with equal or greater resolve to achieve justice.

For everyone who is so hasty to condemn on the basis of the transcripts, let him ask himself: "What would I have done in this situation?" I, myself, find in these

transcripts not a demonstration of villainy and guile, but the reaction of a very human American to having been "set up."

Those who would feign horror and disgust at the language and ideas which have been wrung from the archives, either are the grossest and most dangerous of hypocrites, or are totally naive as regards the private language and thought of the American male. Even the gods of Olympus were permitted this humanness; why should it astonish anyone that someone who has been chosen from among us does not possess all the virtues of a Christ?

Let this man be judged in perspective, if now judge him we must.

Where are all the voices who cried for an end to the Vietnam war? And he ended it.

Where are those who cheered when he returned from Moscow? from Peking?

And who has said one word about the scores of millions of casualties he prevented by last October's Alert, his reaction — cool, sober, yet swift — to a crisis that, had it developed, would have made World War II look like a kindergarten fistfight?

And now even the notables of the Republican party desert him, as if to demonstrate that their purity is above all this. Let these, most pious of all, reflect that if this man — their President, their only real anchor in a democratic government — is forsaken to be devoured by the dogs, then there will be no more Republican party; and all of the Percys, and Goldwaters, and Rockefeller's, and Reagans will be as a gaggle of Alf Landons.

This President is being assassinated as surely as was John F. Kennedy, not with bullets perhaps, but politically, and just as certainly. By each innuendo he is being killed; by each cruel sneer, each cutting satire, by each shabby inhumanity

to man he is being killed; by everyone who wails "I'm sick of it all, I wish it would end, I don't care how but I wish it would end" he is being left to die. Of all his faults, his greatest was that he forsook his lieutenants, and now he is being left to die — alone.

Again, if you would judge him, ask first "What would I have done in that situation?" And ask next "Where are those who are truly responsible for the entrapment, for the blackmail?" Ask "Who are they that stand to profit from all of this, who insist that it be done now to our President, rather than later to a private citizen?" And if then you still condemn him, remember what you have done when he is gone.

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