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The Larger Meaning of Mr. Nixon's Presidency

save his own skin. every friend in a desperate effort to President Nixon has at last brought us together. The country is now united in relief at the resignation of the leader who betrayed every value and

in its virtues as in its defects. on's departure should not blind us to It was of a piece, from first to last, and the larger meaning of his presidency. But the ignoble manner of Mr. Nix

such hope for development as resided supposed to hold the balance against in the Third World. ment to buy gold, supported prosperity exchange rate and a one-way commitin Japan and Western Europe, and ket, opened to the world by a lopsided any change deemed favorable to either forces, especially Russia or China. The American mar-American 1969, American pretension far outran When Mr. Nixon took office back in capabilities. in Vietnam, were American

ciety itself would be disrupted. paid off its down-and-out claimants, so subject to government discrimination in the welfare of minority groups long make decisive and rapid improvements posed that government action could sion had arrived, and that inflation lieved that prosperity without recesit was said that unless government an income policy. It was equally supcould be held in check by the device of In this country it was widely be

reality. He engaged the Chinese Comto bring expectations more in line with Mr. Nixon's great achievement was

"All of us learned that government programs do not suffice to amend the social ills of centuries."

to previous regimes, or imagined by those of us who criticized his policy. able to pull out of Vietnam on terms with the threat of a China deal, he was tion. He then addressed himself to far more favorable than ever offered Moscow. By squeezing the Russians munists and brought them out of isola-

erected against the danger of nuclear gether. which Dr. Kissinger is now putting topower confrontation opened the way to start the most important barrier yet the settlement between Jews and Arabs the October war in the Mideast, and Moreover, the loosening up of great Treaty reached with Russia in 1972. war—the Strategic Arms Limitation By the same means, he was able to

Finally, by unilaterally closing down the gold window in August 1971. Mr. Nixon set the stage for the dollar dewas thus laid for a new set of relations try and the rest of the world. The basis the terms of trade between this counvaluations which have now evened out

> ans and Japanese. between this country and the Europe-

cession came dramatically home. problem. The danger that the battle ize that inflation was an intractable on's efforts at home. But during his against rising prices could tip into reterm in office, everybody came to real Far less success attended Mr. Nix

tered by a tough stance—far better equally shown that violent protests by than by "understanding." minority groups could be met and mas available for such programs. It was was a tight limit available on what was social ills of centuries-and that there programs do not suffice to amend the All of us learned that government

toral politics, not presidential politics. didate of a minority. He played elec times he was in his own eyes the canas the leader of all the people. At all term. But Mr. Nixon never saw himself ism and falling expectations, he might late these achievements, had he been have come safely to the end of his able to declare the virtue of sober real-Had Mr. Nixon been able to articu-

claimed a new prosperity and a did not exist—a structure of peace. In-American Revolution. eign policy, he announced what clearly its way in domestic policy, he stead of admitting the country had lost So instead of an adjustment in forpro-

reaucracy, They insulted the Congress who dared to criticize were stigmathe media. They short-circuited the bu-Instead of reconciling doubters, and drawing to his side old foes, he salted tized as "enemies." and sabotaged Democrats. Those of us the wounds. He and his men battered

reality in a psychic bunker of his own was alone, divorced from friends and truth would out. In the end, Mr. Nixon even as mounting evidence showed the lief that lies and tricks would work Contempt for others festered the bethere was born a monstrous fraud. human contacts which are the stuff of reality. Out of pride and sycophancy Watergate, Mr. Nixon was without the When trouble came in the form of

own doom. off from reality, rush headlong to their claims anew the deathless message ning and his middle. At all stages, in that those blinded by pride, and cut announces the danger of hubris. It prodency announces a single warning. It its good parts and its bad, his presi-His end was implicit in his begin-

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