

## Mr. Nixon 'Has Paid the Price'

To the Editor:

Whatever one may feel about the character of Richard Nixon, he certainly achieved two most important goals for this country. The first was extricating us from the Vietnam war and the second was the détente he achieved with Russia and China.

The first problem really started with the "Truman Doctrine" to contain aggressive Stalinist Russia. It had already taken over a good part of Free Europe by force. Containing Communism was the policy of every President since World War II. A détente was not felt possible by any Administration since that war. Mr. Nixon's "mistakes" were in confusing these great goals with his own political popularity.

We should not forget the burnings, the take-overs, the marching, the demonstrations, which greatly threatened the well-being of this country just a few short years ago. I believe Mr. Nixon felt that these were in a large measure engendered by agents of Communism, and at least in part, I agree.

I don't believe our forefathers wrote into our law the prohibition against forcible entry for any other reason than protecting the individual in his own home. In those early days we did not have any need for protecting the well-being of our country from "intelligence" and espionage. The Department of Justice and the C.I.A. both practice clandestine operations when they are felt to be in the public inter-

est. I believe that Mr. Nixon first began to use these agencies to preserve what he considered to be all-important goals for our country. But not being satisfied with this more-or-less indirect method, he mistakenly established within the White House itself the so-called "Plumbers Unit." The Pentagon Papers and other leaks of confidential information led him to believe that any attack on him was an attack on the well-being of the nation.

After Watergate, he began to realize the "mistakes" he had made and sought to protect himself politically as well as his agents.

I believe the whole thing was the result of patriotic intentions becoming mixed up with political pride and a sense of responsibility to those who had been directly involved.

What ex-President Nixon may be able to do with the rest of his life is problematic. I believe, with President Ford, that he has paid his price.

I would expect that a great newspaper like The Times would take a broader point of view instead of joining the pack of wolves who seem to want to devour the ex-President.

The country has suffered a lot, but it has learned a lot through this devastating episode. I don't think anything like it will ever happen again. I support the President's pardon and would hope that all implicated in Watergate would likewise be pardoned.

WALTER H. WHEELER JR.  
Stamford, Conn., Sept. 25, 1974

Pardon Speculation:  
'Ultimate Cover-Up'?

To the Editor:

Although various reasons have been advanced for President Ford's deliberate subversion of justice and misuse of constitutional powers in granting Mr. Nixon a pardon, they all boil down ultimately to the regretful conclusion that President Ford was guilty of "poor judgment."

Nonsense! A man does not remain in Congress for over twenty years, nor does he become the leader of his party in the House of Representatives, by displaying poor judgment. We must look elsewhere for President Ford's reasons.

Not even playing football without a helmet—if he ever did—could have so addled President Ford's brains as to make him suppose that his action would have had any effect other than to ruin such chances in the coming election as his party may have recouped as a result of Mr. Nixon's resignation.

Why then did he do it? The reasons he gave in his pardon speech are so much piffle. President Ford does not, as he rather sophomorically attempted to imply, have a private telephone line to God. Nor is he so incompetent a lawyer as to put any credence in the argument that Mr. Nixon could not get a fair trial. If that argument were to be taken seriously, we would have to free every criminal caught red-handed since his presumption of innocence would be gone.

The logical extension of this extraordinary argument is that any criminal who feels the police closing in has only to write a letter to The New York Times confessing his guilt in order to go free.

What makes it all the more extraordinary is that while arguing that pretrial publicity had removed Mr. Nixon's right to a presumption of innocence, President Ford was announcing, with what one can only characterize as breathtaking insouciance, that Mr. Nixon was in fact guilty.

President Ford's action, coming so soon after his announced intention not to interfere with the law, has all the earmarks of an act of desperate self-preservation. As House Minority Leader, Mr. Ford would have been high in Republican party councils during the election campaign and may well have spent time in the Oval Office. Is this "ultimate cover-up of the cover-up" a cover-up of his own role in the Watergate affair by a man who is still the puppet of his former master? Could Mr. Nixon suddenly have come up with a tape on which Mr. Ford was agreeing to be a good soldier and go along with the then Commander in Chief? Why else the amazing deal giving Mr. Nixon access to the tapes? Why else the extra \$249,000 for Mr. Nixon?

Would it be too much to expect that Congress will stop sighing with relief and congratulating itself and get back to the exhaustive investigation of corruption in the Presidency that President Ford's action has again made imperative?

Either crime pays and justice is dead, or the opposite is true. There is no other alternative.

GEORGE E. WELLWARTH  
Binghamton, N.Y., Sept. 15, 1974