

# Richard Nixon? A year later a non person

By Clark Hoyt  
Knight News Service

WASHINGTON — It is almost as though, one year after he left town in disgrace, Richard Nixon had never been here at all.

When they mailed out announcements this summer for "Honor America Day," there were patriotic sayings on the back page from five of the last six presidents — Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Ford.

There was no mention of Richard Nixon — 37th President of the United States, architect of détente, traveler to Peking and Moscow, unindicted Watergate co-conspirator — by the Honor America organizers, who included such old Nixon pals as Willard Marriott, Bob Hope and Billy Graham.

In the small, ornate Capitol office of State Republican whip Robert Griffin, the candid photos of a smiling Nixon in happier days have been removed from the off-white walls. They have been replaced by pictures of politicians more in fashion, such as Jerry Ford.

And at Duke University Law School, two spotlights splash on a bare space on the paneled wall where Nixon's formal portrait once hung among other portraits of honored, distinguished alumni.

He has become almost a non-person in the style of the Soviet Union. Ironically, Richard Nixon, one-time anti-Communist, kitchen debater with Nikita Khrushchev, may be more highly regarded in Russia today than in his own country.

Volume 18 of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia came out last winter with a long, laudatory biography of Nixon, praising him for relaxing East-West tensions and ending the Vietnam War. It mentioned only in a single cryptic sentence the Watergate scandals that finally drove Nixon to resign last

August 9 and go into exile behind the walls of his San Clemente estate.

Nixon's fall was the most spectacular. But one year later, the lives of dozens of other Watergate figures, some of whom shared the power of the White House with Nixon, others who never met the man, are still in disarray.

Former presidential assistant John Ehrlichman is a bearded, lonely wanderer in Santa Fe, N.M., separated from his wife and five children. He is performing, in his words, "personal penance" by assisting the Pueblo Indians.

Former Attorney General John Mitchell, like Ehrlichman facing the prospect of prison if appeals fail, is badgered by more than a dozen Watergate-related lawsuits. He finds solace in the company of a wealthy Georgetown widow who runs two of Washington's most exclusive restaurants. He is said to pay his estranged wife, Martha, \$1000 a week support.

Bernard Barker and Eugenio Martinez, two of the Cuban-born burglars whose arrests inside Democratic national headquarters more than three years ago started the beginning of the end for the Nixon Administration, are back selling real estate in Miami. They are said to fear that some zealot, noting their felony convictions, will try to have their real estate licenses revoked.

Nixon has made a good physical and mental recovery, according to friends, from the depression that gripped him after his resignation and from the plebeities that almost took his life last fall.

The brooding and compulsive late-night telephone calls that once led friends to worry about Nixon's survival have been replaced with a new zest for work on his memoirs and a lively interest in current affairs of state, especially foreign policy

developments.

"He is no longer morbidly looking at the past," says a former White House aide. "The last time I heard from him he was active and at work on his book."

An old pal who paid a long afternoon visit to the former president not long ago recalled that Nixon led the conversation over a broad range of subjects. At one point he discussed in surprising detail the influence of a high-echelon Arab official on his government's international policy.

Nixon's left leg, still subject to swelling from his plebeities, was propped on a footstool.

Nixon is kept abreast of world affairs in part by classified intelligence briefings sent about every 10 days to the Coast Guard station adjoining the 28-acre Nixon compound.

He was reported to have been upset at the fall of South Vietnam and Cambodia and to have told associates that, had he still been in office, he would have tried to take steps to prevent the Communist victories.

According to sources who have visited San Clemente lately, however, Nixon has made a firm decision not to speak out on public affairs until at least after the 1976 election.

He apparently recognizes that the pardon granted him by his successor aroused strong political passions. They could begin cracking again if he were to surface any time soon with pronouncements on issues.

But, says a friend, "I'd think we'd be hearing a lot more from him, particularly on foreign policy, in 1977."

SEE ALSO 16 JUL, 9 AND 75.



### BAREFOOT NIXON ON THE BEACH

Greeting public with strained smile