

Editor — That the pardon of former President Nixon should again become a political issue is an indication of just how much mileage politicians try to get out of people's emotional reactions. Jimmy Carter said the people would resent a campaign built on that issue and he is right. I do differ with Carter on the propriety of the pardon, however. It always takes political courage to do the unpopular and President Ford showed that courage.

The overwhelming political nature of Nixon's offense is what opponents of the pardon seem to miss. No financial gain was achieved or hoped for. Under normal circumstances Nixon's Watergate actions would be accepted as being within the chief executive's prerogatives. District attorneys, government executives of various levels, and the Justice Department at some times make decisions not to pursue investigations or not to prosecute when there may be a case and this is accepted as normal. Properly so, for there are times when prudence must be used. This is theoretically obstruction of justice. In fact, any time there is not prosecution to the full extent of the law obstruction of justice can be said to occur.

President Ford said the pardon was in the best interests of the nation. I believe he was right in this. Had the pardon not been granted at the time a precedent would have been set which likely would have made it impossible for a former president to live in the United States after his term of office. There will always be some decisions a president has to make that some person will feel is unjust. The best a former president could hope for would be a continuing court fight after he left the White House.

Some will sanctimoniously say that a president should obey the law. Of course he should but there are so many things a president could be accused of. For example, President Ford could be accused of violating a person's right to a job by his veto of the full employment bill. Or he could be

accused of responsibility for a lower level government employee's crime. There is really no end to the possible accusations a former president could face.

The people of this nation can be thankful we were spared an ugly political trial which would have started the United States on the road to becoming a banana republic where ex-presidents are either exiled or executed. Far from being a spot on his presidency, the pardon was President Ford's finest hour.

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