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The Presidency of Richard Nixon (American Presidency (Univ of Kansas Paperback))

Melvin Small

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The Presidency of Richard Nixon (American Presidency (Univ of Kansas Paperback)) Melvin Small Twenty-five years after Richard Nixon resigned from office, his legacy remains shrouded in controversy. His was a complex, inconsistent, and even contradictory presidency, shaped by the man's personality and political practices and played out during one of America's most turbulent eras. Melvin Small now draws on the latest archival releases to take a fresh look at Nixon and place his administration in proper historical perspective.

Nixon once predicted that by the year 2000 scholars would begin to evaluate his presidency more favorably. Small, however, steers a steady course between Nixon's detractors and apologists to offer the most balanced and thorough coverage yet available of the man's character and accomplishments. He notes many of the solid achievements of Nixon's domestic programs while criticizing some of his more celebrated foreign policies, especially concerning the Third World, and illuminates Nixon's broader influence on American political institutions and culture.

Small's topical approach permits readers to observe the development of an entire domestic program or international relationship over an extended period, making it easier to understand such drawn-out issues as reforming welfare or ending the Vietnam War. Regarding Vietnam, Small integrates military and diplomatic policy with Nixon's efforts to neutralize the antiwar movement. His coverage of White House operations and Nixon's war with the media precedes a particularly insightful chapter on Watergate and the threat of impeachment. A closing chapter on Nixon's post-presidential years reveals facts about his health and his "blackmailing" of both Presidents Bush and Clinton, and a bibliographic essay provides an extensive survey of the Nixon literature.

He was the first president to travel to China and to call for welfare reform, and although he left Washington under a cloud, many of Nixon's ideas and policies have been embraced by Americans a legacy few presidents can claim. Small's book is a lively and anecdotal account that looks at the many sides of Richard Nixon and comes to grips with both the man and his presidency.

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