

29 November 1973

The Editor, Peoples Column
Albuquerque Journal
P. O. Drawer J
Albuquerque, N. M. 87103

Dear Sir:

Owing to the large amount of mail he has received on the subject, Representative Manuel Lujan, Jr. has issued a position paper on impeachment of the President. In this rambling document he correctly quotes the provision of the Constitution for the impeachment of civil officers. Then he goes on to distort the meaning of impeachment in the wording of the Constitution. As a lawyer he should know better. He does not seem or wish to understand that impeachment is equivalent to indictment in criminal law and does not require proof. Indictment is a charge of wrong doing which is sustained or dismissed in a subsequent trial; in the case of impeachment of the President in a trial by the Senate.

And to compound the inaccuracies of his paper he shows his ignorance of the history of the impeachment provisions of the Constitution. He says that the President cannot be impeached for crimes committed by anyone other than himself. However, James Madison told the first Congress in 1789 that the President should be subject to impeachment for the misdemeanors of his appointees. It is now known that Nixon was aware of crimes committed by several of his appointees; in fact, that he authorized illegal acts on the grounds of National Security. He also committed other illegal acts including the bombing of Cambodia, and lied about it.

Distortion of the truth, to put it mildly, seems to be a characteristic of this administration. Nixon has repeatedly misstated history as well as twisted the political events of his own administration in an attempt to reverse his declining credibility and to support his claims of innocence. At the same time he readily blames those responsible to him for the crimes committed. This kind of playing free and easy with the truth is becoming an accepted technique for misleading the people and diverting attention from those responsible for misconduct. It is unfortunate that Mr. Lujan seems willing to follow this course.

Yours truly,