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A Conservative Enigma: Barry Goldwater and the Republican Party, 1953-1974

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A CONSERVATIVE ENIGMA:
BARRY GOLDWATER AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, 1953-1974

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

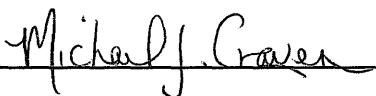
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Michael J. Craven
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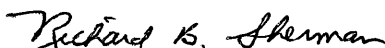
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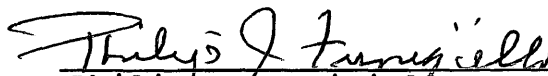
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the career of Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater impacted upon the Republican party and the understanding of conservative principles. The paper will focus primarily on the years spanning Goldwater's presidential campaign in 1964 to the Watergate affair in 1974, although some attention will be given to the Senator's life and career both prior to, and after, these events. Barry Goldwater's relationship with other members of the Republican party during this period, particularly Richard Nixon, will also be explored.

This paper will show that Barry Goldwater little understood the guiding precepts of conservatism as outlined by many of his contemporaries. Moreover, his prominent role within the Republican party after his 1964 election defeat helped bring about the presidency of Richard Nixon. Despite obvious philosophical differences between the two men, Goldwater supported Nixon through much of the Watergate crisis, thus undermining the Republican party. Goldwater's reputation as a man who openly criticized Nixon during the unraveling of Watergate was not wholly deserved.

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A CONSERVATIVE ENIGMA:
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INTRODUCTION

Barry Goldwater's run for the presidency in 1964 was a significant event in American political history.

No presidential campaign since Franklin Roosevelt's 1932 contest offered voters a more radical alternative to the existing philosophy of government.¹ Goldwater, the Republican party candidate that year, wanted to redirect the country toward a more "conservative" orientation than had been practiced in the preceding thirty years. Unlike F.D.R., he suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the incumbent, President Lyndon Johnson, a Democrat, who continued the established pattern of government liberalism. Nonetheless, Goldwater remained active within the Republican party, and in the ten years following his presidential defeat experienced a political resurrection in the wake of public reaction to Vietnam, the Great Society, and Watergate.

Barry Goldwater often receives credit for injecting conservative ideals into the arena of presidential politics for the first time. Many would argue, however, that Goldwater little understood the guiding precepts of true "conservatism." Russell Kirk, a scholar and spokesman for conservative

¹ Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1964 (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1965), 295.

thinking, defined a conservative as one who protects cherished institutions, social and civil order, and individual initiative against the trappings of materialism.² National Review contributor Frank S. Meyer said that a conservative tries to better the human condition, while resisting the notion that man is "perfectible" via government supported social engineering. A conservative interprets the Constitution as it was originally conceived by the Founding Fathers. Meyer stressed, however, that such a philosophy could never "content itself with appealing to the past. The very circumstances that call conscious conservatism into being create an irrevocable break with the past."³

Barry Goldwater did not do justice to the concepts that embody conservatism. Instead of rallying the American people to a viable, relevant alternative to New Deal/Great Society liberalism, he allowed the term "conservatism" to stand for, in the words of poet-author Peter Viereck, "a facade for either plutocratic profiteering or fascist-style thought control nationalism."⁴ That he was considered conservative at all, argued historian William O'Neill, "only shows how

² Russell Kirk, The Conservative Mind (Chicago: Regnery Books, 1986), iii.

³ William F. Buckley, ed. Did You Ever See a Dream Walking? (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), 76, 81-3.

⁴ Peter Viereck, Conservatism Revisited (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1949, 1962), 17.

impoverished American conservatism had become."⁵ This thesis will examine the validity of these statements, as well as track Barry Goldwater's rise from obscure Senator to presidential candidate and Republican party leader.

Chapter one will chronicle Goldwater's early life and career, focusing on how factors such as the postwar Republican political climate, coupled with the Senator's personal attributes, attracted right-wing organizers who launched his presidential bid. Chapter two will examine the Goldwater presidential campaign, centering on how Goldwater's public statements, together with the actions of his followers, conflicted with conservative beliefs as outlined by leading political intellectuals. This chapter will also explore the healing process undertaken by the Republican party following Goldwater's defeat and the Senator's role in getting the G.O.P to support Richard Nixon in 1968. Chapter three will explain Goldwater's role during the Nixon administration up through Watergate, when he re-emerged as a party leader and earned a reputation--only partially deserved--as the President's chief intra-party antagonist.

⁵ William L. O'Neill, Coming Apart (New York: Times Books, 1971), 108.

CHAPTER I

"I JUST WANTED CONSERVATIVES TO HAVE A VOICE"

That the first presidential nominee clearly identified with the Republican party's right-wing hailed from Arizona was no accident. The expansion of the Sunbelt after World War II made that area a powerful new force in American politics. The area's wealth was based on oil, cattle, land development, tourism, and defense contracts. It was a region of self-made wealth that came about from hard work, as opposed to the inherited money so prevalent in the East. With its newly realized riches, the Sunbelt demanded its fair share of political power. The rugged individualism espoused by the Western nouveau-riche was at odds with the sense of noblesse-oblige found among the Eastern aristocracy; the former railed against the welfare state that had been well entrenched in Washington since the days of Franklin Roosevelt. They yearned for an alternative that stressed individual initiative instead of government largesse.¹

Arizona was still a U.S. Territory when Barry Morris Goldwater was born on New Year's Day, 1909, the son of a

¹ Jonathan Martin Kolkey, The New Right, 1960-1968 With Epilogue, 1969-1980 (Washington: University Press of America, 1983), 4.

Jewish retail clothier father and an Episcopalian mother. Young Goldwater enjoyed a well-to-do upbringing, having been inculcated with his mother's religious beliefs and his father's penchant for hard work. Despite the relative wealth of his family, Goldwater came to realize that being "respectable" went beyond having money; it meant showing respect toward oneself and others and exercising responsibility for "paying your way." He was educated at Staunton Military Academy in Virginia, then went on to spend one year at the University of Arizona. His college career was cut short by his father's sudden death, at which time he went to work in the family clothing store. The business went through hard times during the Great Depression but managed to stay afloat without any layoffs. The experience left a deep imprint upon the young businessman's economic philosophy; he developed a strong opposition to "governmental borrowing."²

During World War II, Goldwater served as a pilot in the Pacific theater. He performed admirably, but came away from the ordeal believing that the war could have been avoided if the United States had remained militarily strong during the interwar years. Upon returning stateside, he helped create an Air National Guard unit in Arizona. One of the stipulations he insisted upon was that the unit be nonsegregated. He continued to serve in the reserves, rising to the rank of Major General before retiring in 1967. Throughout his

² Barry M. Goldwater, With No Apologies (New York: William Morris, 1979), 22-6.

political life he was to be a devoted friend of the military, advocating a large standing army and ample defense expenditures to ensure "victory" in the Cold War.

Goldwater found the staid life of an upscale businessman rather bland in comparison to the success he had enjoyed in his military endeavors. Since a full-time military career was out of the question due to his poor eyesight, he turned his attention to an arena that would give him an opportunity to express his outspoken views: politics. In 1949 he won election to the Phoenix City Council in the midst of a reform movement to clean up corruption in the city government. The next year he helped his friend Howard Pyle win the governorship of Arizona. That a Republican like Pyle could win in a state with the strong Democratic voting tradition of Arizona captured Goldwater's imagination, and in what seemed like a risk doomed to failure, he announced his intention to run for the United States Senate against incumbent Democratic Majority Leader Earnest McFarland.

Goldwater had registered as a Republican as "an act of defiance" to the long domination of the Democrats in Arizona politics. He was thoroughly disappointed with the policies of Franklin Roosevelt, whose New Deal programs never lived up to their lofty rhetoric. Goldwater was particularly at odds with F.D.R.'s National Industrial Recovery Act, which he felt allowed too much government interference in private business. The Arizonan found the corruption of the Truman administration intolerable, and decried the Truman's dismantling of the

military following World War II. He campaigned for a balanced budget, more individual self-reliance, more power to local government, a stronger military, and a stronger anti-Communist stance in foreign policy.³ Still, he was not nearly so militant against the "welfare state" as he would be later in his career. In his first campaign speech he said he shared voter concern for "retaining the social gains which have been made in the past twenty years."⁴ He came out in favor of Social Security, unemployment insurance, and aid to dependent children. The only explanation that can be offered to justify this seeming contradiction in principles was his determination to ride General Dwight Eisenhower's coattails to victory. Goldwater defeated McFarland by 7,000 votes.

His campaign platform during this first Senate race illustrates a remarkable aspect about Barry Goldwater's political philosophy: its almost total fixation upon the virtues of free-enterprise. Phrases like "welfare state," "individual initiative," and "economic freedom" were an extensive part of his repertoire. How this correlates with the doctrine of conservatism--a philosophy that grew to be strongly identified with his name--has been debated by the leading intellectuals of that discipline.

Historian Clinton Rossiter, in his book Conservatism in

³ Ibid., 32, 38. Barry M. Goldwater, with Jack Casserly, Goldwater (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 63, 96-7.

⁴ Richard Rovere, The Goldwater Caper (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1965), 29.

America, defined a conservative as one who knows that transformations within the government, be they social, ideological, or economic, are sometimes necessary for growth and progress, but insists that the change be "sure footed and respectful of the past." A conservative tends toward "stability over change, continuity over experiment, and the past over the future." This was opposed to the actions of a liberal, whom Rossiter explained would "choose change over stability," and "experiment over continuity."⁵ Conservative intellectual scholar George Nash expressed similar views, but stressed that conservatives are not "backward-looking." They cannot dismiss everything that has come before them. Goldwater represented a breed of conservatism that was far to the right of such a philosophy. Instead of looking to the past to build upon future progress, he retreated into the past to find a time when society was presumably better off, and sought to reorient the social process back in that direction.⁶

The new Senator from Arizona did claim to draw inspiration from eighteenth-century British politician Edmund Burke, whose writings left Goldwater with deep appreciation for the relevance of tradition, generational contracts with one's forebears, and a distrust of those who seek to better

⁵ Clinton Rossiter, Conservatism in America (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1955), 12.

⁶ George H. Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945 (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 191-2.

society through government fiat.⁷ Still, this did little to explain his later antipathy for the economic reforms of the preceding twenty years which, many would argue, had themselves, over time, become institutionalized. Indeed, conservative historian Peter Viereck argued that "the real American conserver assimilates into conservatism whatever he finds lasting and good in liberalism and in the New Deal."⁸

Although Goldwater rode to victory on the heels of Dwight Eisenhower's 1952 presidential triumph, the presidential hopeful of most conservatives that year was Senator Robert A. Taft. Goldwater supported Ike because he felt the General was "a fresh political personality, he could win, and the party needed a new beginning."⁹ The Republicans were back in power, both in the White House and in the Senate, but Goldwater's affection for Eisenhower would not last.

Goldwater's early Senate career was rather undistinguished. As author Jonathan Kolkey put it, his first term "featured a dismal attendance record and few legislative accomplishments. The gregarious Arizona Solon spent more energy hitting the Republican Party banquet circuit."¹⁰ With the exception of military power, he opposed almost any

⁷ Goldwater, With No Apologies, 98-9.

⁸ Viereck, Conservatism, 126.

⁹ Goldwater, Goldwater, 96.

¹⁰ Kolkey, The New Right, 173.

extension of federal responsibility.¹¹ He was appointed to the committees of Banking and Commerce, Public Welfare, and Labor. Working in the latter committee, he attacked the influence of organized labor in Congress, the political use of union slush funds, and forced union membership. He shared the Kennedy brothers' contempt for Teamsters President Jimmy Hoffa, but when they refused to join him in expressing similar views toward United Auto Workers President Walter Reuther, this convinced Goldwater of the undue financial influence that big labor had on the Democratic party. The Arizona Senator's outspokenness garnered him the label "number one enemy" of labor, and union bosses poured an enormous amount of money into ensuring Goldwater's defeat for re-election in 1958. That they were unsuccessful attests to the relative lack of sympathy for big labor in Arizona, and the West, at that time.¹²

While Goldwater's tangle with organized labor may have stood him in good stead with his constituents, Peter Viereck argued that the Senator had perhaps gone too far in his attacks on labor as a whole. American conservatives, he suggested, needed to stop looking at labor as the enemy. Indeed, trade unions were unwittingly the agents of promoting conservatism through their empowerment of the working class, providing what British poet and philosopher Samuel Taylor

¹¹ Rovere, Goldwater Caper, 35-6.

¹² Goldwater, Goldwater, 100-1.

Coleridge described as the "intermediate between both doctrinaire capitalism and socialism."¹³

One experience in the Senator's early career that was especially significant was his appointment as head of the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee in 1955. This post allowed him to travel extensively, with the dual effect of gaining even more national exposure and the chance to meet influential G.O.P. leaders across the nation who would help him in his future presidential race. During Goldwater's frequent absences from the Senate chamber, he could be found crisscrossing the nation stumping for the party.

The Eisenhower years were ones of frustration for the young Senator. Ike's administration was seen by many on the G. O. P. right as a preservation of the New Deal, with its failure to "roll back" both the New/Fair Deal programs at home and Communism abroad.¹⁴ Eisenhower was re-elected in 1956, but while the nation still liked Ike, many Republicans went down to defeat.

Goldwater broke with Eisenhower in April 1957 over the President's budget proposal for that year. One of the conditions that had made Ike acceptable to party conservatives in his 1952 campaign was his promise to reduce the size of the federal budget. The 1957 proposal of 71.8 billion dollars, on the contrary, was the largest peacetime budget proposal in

¹³ Viereck, Conservatism, 40, 135.

¹⁴ David W. Reinhard, The Republican Right Since 1945 (Lexington, KY: University of KY Press, 1983), 107.

history. On the Senate floor, Goldwater assailed the President for failing to live up to his campaign promise and for putting forth proposals that, far from offering alternatives to the "socialistic" welfare programs of the last two decades, instead "aped New Deal antics."¹⁵ Author David Reinhard views this "Battle of the Budget" as the opening skirmish in the war for control of the G. O. P. between the various party factions. The budget issue, while an effective target in its own right, was used by the right-wing as a vehicle with which to attack Eisenhower's "Modern Republicanism" which noted conservative commentator William Buckley faulted for trying to please everybody while being devoid of objective. Goldwater voted in support of only 52 percent of administration proposals after the budget crisis.¹⁶

The right-wing Republican break with Eisenhower served as evidence, according to George Nash, of conservatism's "growing isolation from American politics." Dogmatic arguments extolling the virtues of states' rights, individual freedom and unrestrained free-market capitalism were not appealing to the average American, who more than likely benefitted from the federal largesse of the last twenty years. It was no longer relevant to warn people about the ill effects of the welfare state, because much of it had become rooted into the federal system. Conservatives had to show examples of liberal failure

¹⁵ Goldwater, With No Apologies, 64.

¹⁶ Reinhard, Republican Right, 140-1; William F. Buckley, Up From Liberalism (New York: McDowell, Oblensky, 1959), 95, 97.

in areas like urban renewal, minimum wage, taxes, forced desegregation, and Social Security.¹⁷ Clinton Rossiter observed that if conservatism was to have a future it must "practice a conservatism that is mature, constructive, and responsible." In order to do this the various party factions had to find common ground and press for change not for its own sake, but because it is needed, limited in scope, and respects the laws and traditions of society.¹⁸

With his re-election in 1958, Senator Barry Goldwater emerged as the preeminent national figure of the Republican right. In the previous decade a number of conservative luminaries, both famous and infamous, had passed from the scene. Robert Taft and Joseph McCarthy were dead, and Senate Majority Leader William Knowland had run an unsuccessful campaign for the governorship of California. What Goldwater lacked in major legislative accomplishments he made up for with a vigorous speaking schedule. His tenure as Republican Campaign Chairman allowed him to stump tirelessly for G.O.P. candidates and to meet various local party bosses, which boosted his recognition among the Republican rank-and-file. All of these phenomena combined to make the once obscure Arizona Senator a major player in Republican party politics.¹⁹

¹⁷ George H. Nash, Conservative Intellectual, 255, 273-4.

¹⁸ Clinton Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 3, 29.

¹⁹ M. Stanton Evans, The Future of Conservatism (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1969), 231; Michael Miles, The Odyssey of the American Right (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 286-7.

Barry Goldwater was different from the above-named predecessors, most notably Ohio Senator Robert Taft, in a number of ways. The latter was a master of procedure in the Senate, and a number of major legislative proposals bore his name. He had been a candidate for his party's presidential nomination in 1948 and 1952, both times losing to Republican contenders considerably to the left of himself. While essentially a foe of what historian Alonzo Hamby called "Rooseveltian liberalism," Taft could be surprisingly moderate on specific issues, such as federal housing and aid for education.²⁰ He championed the free-market economy as the key to economic prosperity, but his approach to economic problems was pragmatic rather than doctrinaire. He once said that the free-enterprise system "has certain faults" and warned that if such a system did not try to eliminate poverty it would be replaced "by a less progressive system which does."²¹

Taft fought each New Deal proposal tenaciously, but once it was enacted he moved on to another battle.²² Clinton Rossiter would have approved of the way Taft justified his support of some government activities by "fitting them into

²⁰ Alonzo L. Hamby, Liberalism and Its Challengers: F.D.R. to Bush (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 104-5.

²¹ James T. Patterson, Mr. Republican (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1972), 318-9.

²² A. James Reichley, Conservatives in an Age of Change. The Nixon and Ford Administrations (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1981), 22-6.

his magic formula of equality of opportunity."²³ Indeed, Robert A. Taft was a complex, practical politician more than he was an adherent to any party doctrine. To him, conservatism did not mean "constant opposition to change or a failure to respond to problems that people were asking the federal government to address."²⁴ He saw the utility of a number of liberal programs, and saw the need for the federal government to provide at least a bare-minimum of protection to its citizens. The Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill provided for low income housing, slum clearance, and urban renewal, and serves as an example of how the Ohio Senator sought a broader perspective for conservatism than market economics.²⁵

Taft's biographer James Patterson pointed out that the Ohio Senator's social-welfare convictions were not born of altruism. Rather, they were formulated through disinterested intellectual analysis. As a result, Taft usually appeared passionless when addressing fundamental problems of human suffering, and failed to capitalize politically on a subject "that deeply moved socially conscious Americans."²⁶

Unlike the relatively pragmatic Taft, Goldwater appeared to be motivated by more rigid ideological considerations. This political philosophy was best illustrated by a book

²³ Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 196.

²⁴ Reinhard, Republican Right, 110.

²⁵ Reichley, Age of Change, 50.

²⁶ Patterson, Mr. Republican, 325.

released in 1960 entitled The Conscience of a Conservative. Although short in length, the book caused a huge sensation in Republican party circles and further propelled the Arizona Senator into the national limelight. In it Goldwater argued that a conservative views politics as "the art of achieving the maximum amount of freedom for individuals that is consistent with the maintenance of social order."²⁷ In support of this philosophy, he put forth arguments that maintained a constitutionally rigid approach regarding education, labor, states rights, and civil rights. Goldwater maintained that while it may be good in principle to allow black children access to traditionally white schools, they "do not have a civil right to do so which is protected by the federal constitution, or which is enforceable by the federal government."²⁸ The tenth amendment reserved such matters to the jurisdiction of state governments. Goldwater also railed against agricultural price supports and the overreaching power of labor unions. Regarding the latter, the Senator asserted that their only legitimate function was collective bargaining; they crossed the line when they engaged in activities that had nothing to do with employment. In sum, the federal government

²⁷ Barry M. Goldwater, The Conscience of a Conservative (Shepherdsville, KY: Victor Publishing Co., 1960), 70. It has been widely speculated (and often accepted) that Goldwater did not write this book himself; prominent right-wing intellectual L. Brent Bozell ghostwrote it using a compilation of Goldwater speeches as a guide. Goldwater's name, however, appears on the cover, and he has always assumed responsibility for the book's contents.

²⁸ Ibid., 28.

must scale back from those programs that it had no constitutional authority to direct: welfare, federal housing, agriculture, and urban renewal. Control of these programs lay with state and local governments. Pat Buchanan perhaps put it best when he asserted that "Goldwater argued that faithfulness to the Constitution was more important than even the most salutary reform that might come of restricting the freedoms the Constitution guaranteed."²⁹

Goldwater took exception to the liberal record in foreign policy as well. His most forceful argument was that our leaders had not made "victory" in the Cold War the highest priority. He advocated withdrawing recognition to Communist regimes and withholding foreign aid to all nations except those committed to the anti-Communist struggle. Most of all, in order to win the Cold War, the United States must not be afraid to wage it. Our nuclear arsenal meant nothing if our leaders were clearly afraid to use it. He urged America to forsake the United Nations in the fight against Communism, calling it an unconstitutional encroachment on United States sovereignty.³⁰

The success of Conscience of a Conservative no doubt did the most to put Barry Goldwater's name on the national political map. Whereas Robert Taft had been an effective legislator, Goldwater had been an effective salesman. His

²⁹ Ibid., xii, 43, 60.

³⁰ Ibid., 91, 94, 108.

"pure and simple message," wrote author David Reinhard, "made him the Right-Wing Republican best suited to the realities of presidential politics in postwar America."³¹ Political historian Theodore White disagreed, charging that Goldwater aroused, rather than harnessed, emotions. He was a moralizer, not an organizer. People who felt the emotional impact of his words were appalled by things like "Communism, waste, weakness, government bureaucracy and anarchy." At the fringes were "madmen and psychopaths disturbed by conspiracy, Negroes, Jews, Catholics, and beardies." This was radically different from Taft followers of the past who sometimes seemed only to want to "hold the country still." Goldwater represented a new breed of conservative from the G.O.P. right-wing which "insisted that the course of affairs be reversed."³²

On the lighter side of political climbing, Barry Goldwater became the first member of the Republican right to attract national appeal because he possessed qualities that were at a premium in the early stages of television media coverage. He was ruggedly handsome and, despite the sharpness of his political theses, possessed a very charming, albeit disarming, candor. In public appearances he had a knack for speaking in a way that the lay person could understand.³³ This was in marked contrast with Robert Taft. The Ohio

³¹ Reinhard, Republican Right, 160-1.

³² White, Making of the President, 89-90.

³³ Evans, Future, 231.

Senator was an unparalleled legislator and sported impressive conservative credentials, but his monotonous public speaking and unattractive physique failed to electrify an increasingly image conscious electorate. William Knowland was similarly handicapped. That the Republican party--most notably the right-wing--had a star in the making was becoming apparent.³⁴ 1960, however, was too soon to push for party control. Vice-President Richard Nixon, a man who possessed a far different personal and political demeanor than Barry Goldwater, had the backing of G.O.P. delegates, as well as the party service credentials, to assure a formidable run for the White House that year.

In nineteen-sixty the race for the Republican nomination was between Vice-President Richard Nixon and New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller. The former supported government action in domestic affairs, was a notorious hard-liner on Communism, and was a loyal supporter of Eisenhower.³⁵ Rockefeller, whom author James Reichley categorized as a "Progressive" Republican, advocated government action to meet public needs, but still placed great stock in private and state initiative. He was for a balanced budget but also for federal health insurance and aid to education. Given these positions some, including Goldwater, wondered why Rockefeller was even a Republican at all. Indeed, had he been a Democrat, Reichley

³⁴ Reinhard, Republican Right, 159-61; Evans, Future, 233.

³⁵ Reichley, Age of Change, 50.

suggested that the New York Governor might well have won the presidency at some point, but he possessed a commitment to "social continuity that prevented him from becoming a true liberal." He viewed reform as a way to preserve the traditional system.³⁶

Actually, it was not much of a contest. Nixon, as the incumbent Vice-President, was nearly automatic for the party nod. He infuriated Goldwater, however, by agreeing to meet with Rockefeller in New York City and allowing for the inclusion of a number of left-leaning programs into the party platform: support for Negro sit-ins in the South, government efforts to stimulate the economy, and a federal medical program for the elderly. Goldwater called it "an American Munich"; it was a sellout of conservative ideals to appease the party establishment yet again. Despite a groundswell of support for the Arizona Senator himself, Goldwater had planned to attend the Republican convention in New York ready to back Nixon. Now he had second thoughts. When the South Carolina delegation put Goldwater's name in nomination, he initially decided to let it stand, hoping the move would dissuade Nixon from taking the nomination for granted. Goldwater had no illusions about preventing Nixon's nomination, however, and in the end withdrew his own name and called for party unity.³⁷

There was support for Goldwater for the Vice-Presidential

³⁶ Ibid., 32-3, 298.

³⁷ Reinhard, Republican Right, 102, 153.

spot on the ticket. National Review columnist L. Brent Bozell suggested that it would have been unwise for the Senator to accept the post because he would have lost a great deal of the independence he enjoyed as a spokesman for the Republican right. He would have had to stump for Nixon, which meant having to defend the distinctly "anti-conservative" record of the Eisenhower administration.³⁸ As it turned out, Goldwater campaigned for Nixon not out of any ideological fervor for the Republican candidate, but out of fear of the Democratic alternative, Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts.³⁹

Kennedy's defeat of Nixon was the final straw for the Republican right. The Vice-President had tried to appease all wings of the party and satisfied none, resulting in yet another liberal "me-too" Republican loss at the polls. In the wake of the 1960 defeat the Republican right-wing was determined to take over the party apparatus and re-make the G.O.P. into what it was truly meant to be: a conservative alternative to New Deal liberalism.⁴⁰ Foreign policy events surrounding the 1960 election only served to enhance the political climate in favor of the G.O.P right. The "loss" of Cuba to Fidel Castro highlighted liberal failure in containing Communism, and the Bay of Pigs fiasco in April 1961 only

³⁸ Kolkey, New Right, 176.

³⁹ Goldwater, With No Apologies, 102.

⁴⁰ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., ed., The History of American Presidential Elections (New York: Chelsea House, 1971), vol. IV, 1940-1968, 3566.

heightened this awareness.⁴¹ Goldwater himself stated, "call me a hawk if you like . . . in our angry, aggressive world, peace can be preserved only by military power, supported by a people prepared to sacrifice to protect their freedom."⁴²

Reaction to Nixon's loss coupled with foreign and domestic crises during the Kennedy administration--Cuba, rising involvement in Vietnam, civil rights disturbances, and a pending civil rights bill--led a Republican political consultant named F. Clifton White to begin planning a strategy for taking control of the G.O.P. and handing it to the right-wing, the section of the Republican party that White felt best represented conservative beliefs. White was a former head of the Young Republicans and a Nixon supporter in 1960 who had since become a "dedicated conservative." In late summer 1961 White gathered several influential friends in Chicago and talked of seizing the G.O.P. Goldwater was contacted, and while he refused to lend his name to the organization, he also refused to repudiate it. White went ahead with his plan to mobilize conservatives and organize volunteers to gather Goldwater delegates for 1964. Early in 1963 the Arizona Senator was again contacted by White, who had considerable success in mobilizing grass-roots support for him. Goldwater seemed annoyed at the publicity but still did not repudiate White's efforts. The National Draft Goldwater Committee was

⁴¹ Kolkey, New Right, 32.

⁴² Goldwater, With No Apologies, 132.

announced in February 1963, with White as national director. When 7,000 people showed up at a Draft Goldwater rally in Washington, D.C., it was clear that Goldwater could no longer ignore the movement.⁴³

The chain of events just described make it clear that Goldwater and the so-called "movement" so strongly identified with his name were, in fact, two separate entities. Goldwater did not initiate the series of events that led to his presidential candidacy. Indeed, he had no desire to be President. At the height of the Draft Goldwater campaign in 1963 he was "still wishing something would happen to get me out of all this. It's all a little frightening."⁴⁴ More to the point, Goldwater's own political convictions--as opposed to those such as Brent Bozell who wrote political pieces for him--were hard to ascertain. The written tracts had a "doctrinaire shrillness" not present in his informal dialogue. Liberal political columnist Richard Rovere, in his book The Goldwater Caper, speculated that Goldwater's conservatism was not a pose, but his association with conservative intellectuals like Bozell, William F. Buckley, and Russell Kirk was odd. After all, Goldwater's conversion to the far right-wing was either very recent or his early Senate campaign had been run on false pretenses; he had won election as an Eisenhower Republican. Rovere's explanation for Goldwater's

⁴³ White, Making of the President, 93.

⁴⁴ Rovere, Goldwater Caper, 12.

drift toward the Republican right lay in the fact that the Senator was "a restless politician without any ideas distinct enough to give him an identity; the National Review crowd had plenty of political ideas but no politicians to give them currency."⁴⁵ Thus Goldwater's appeal to men like Clifton White, who would mold the Senator's considerable popular appeal into his plans for taking over the Republican party.

By 1963 many political observers conceded that President Kennedy could face trouble in the next election. A Time magazine poll found that while the President still had a commanding lead, "Barry Goldwater could give Kennedy a breathlessly close contest."⁴⁶ A Gallup poll taken in August 1963 showed Goldwater leading Kennedy in the South by a margin of 54 to 38 percent, although the President still led nationally. The West could also be trouble for Kennedy, who had carried only three sparsely populated states in that region in 1960. Goldwater, an Arizonan, was sure to have solid support there.⁴⁷

In the political climate of the country, a growing discontent could be felt. Supreme Court decisions authorizing desegregation led to "white backlash" in the nation's cities, fueled by whites who were fed up with increasing black militancy. The Communist issue in Cuba helped spawn anti-

⁴⁵ Ibid., 43, 118.

⁴⁶ Evans, Future, 106.

⁴⁷ Miles, Odyssey, 292.

Communist groups like the John Birch Society. This organization and others like it would find a Goldwater candidacy very appealing.⁴⁸

The assassination of President Kennedy effectively destroyed any chance, however remote, of a successful Goldwater presidential campaign. The two men had disagreed on virtually every political position, yet they remained personally cordial. Goldwater had looked forward to campaigning against Kennedy, and the two had even informally agreed to travel the country in the same train and debate the issues face to face. The Senator was convinced that Kennedy would have run a clean campaign, and that the contest would have exposed the true philosophical differences between the two political parties.⁴⁹

The elevation of Lyndon Baines Johnson to the presidency took away key factors that would have made for a compelling presidential race. The campaign was no longer an East-West/conservative-liberal battle. Johnson was a Westerner (as well as a Southerner) who at the time had no recognizable ideology. Equally important was the fact that the American people had rallied behind L.B.J. and would be in no mood to suffer three presidents in little over one year.⁵⁰

Goldwater was clearly in a quandary. He certainly did

⁴⁸ Schlesinger, Elections, 3567.

⁴⁹ Goldwater, Goldwater, 138-9.

⁵⁰ Evans, Future, 108.

not relish the possibility of running against Johnson; he understood that public support for the new President, coupled with L.B.J.'s own history of political chicanery, would prevent a campaign based on issues. Regardless, the grass-roots campaign that had been at work the last two years trying to capture a Goldwater nomination had progressed too far to be abandoned. After much soul-searching, Goldwater was persuaded by his advisors to go through with the contest, if not for his own sake, then for the sake of his, and their, "message." On January 3, 1964, Goldwater reluctantly announced his candidacy. The man who described himself as the most unwilling presidential aspirant of the twentieth century, reflecting years later upon his ill-starred campaign, stated, "In my gut, there was never a burning desire to be President. I just wanted the conservatives to have a real voice in the country."⁵¹

The Goldwater campaign started off rather inauspiciously, the candidate having finished a disappointing third in New Hampshire, site of the first primary. Although Clifton White's three-year crusade to win over G.O.P delegates had all but assured the Arizona Senator the party nomination well in advance of the convention, Goldwater had to win at least one important primary in order to prove himself a credible vote-getter. That victory came in California, where, in the wake of a massive public relations blitz throughout the state,

⁵¹ Goldwater, Goldwater, 154.

Goldwater won a razor-thin victory over his closest rival, Nelson Rockefeller.

The Arizona Senator's quest for the nomination was hampered by his own controversial public statements. He criticized Social Security and the United Nations in front of a crowd of predominately elderly people in New Hampshire, advocated selling the T.V.A. to a gathering in Knoxville, Tennessee, and on national television suggested using nuclear weapons to defoliate Vietcong supply routes. Not only did these statements confirm the Senator's acute lack of timing, they were picked up by both the national media and his intraparty opponents, thus beginning the trend of Goldwater having to repeatedly clarify or defend his remarks. This constant attention to political damage control by the candidate and his handlers would undermine the Goldwater campaign to its inglorious conclusion.⁵²

Goldwater survived the slings and arrows of his detractors during the primary campaign and arrived at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, site of the G.O.P. convention, ready to receive the party blessing as its standard-bearer. He got the nomination, but political infighting between the various G.O.P. factions shattered Goldwater's credibility as the leader of a unified party. When Nelson Rockefeller took the stage to condemn the takeover of the G.O.P. by right-wing extremist groups that did not represent the true philosophy of

⁵² Miles, Odyssey, 296; White, Making of the President, 303; Reinhard, Republican Right, 184.

the party, he was all but drowned-out by disapproving shouts emanating from Goldwater supporters seated in the upper decks of the hall. Goldwater proclaimed in his acceptance speech that "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. . . . Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue." This statement alarmed many of his G.O.P. colleagues, including former President Eisenhower, who thought Goldwater was saying that the ends justified the means. A meeting was scheduled with the former President to clarify the statement to Ike's satisfaction. Eisenhower, for his part, remained a reluctant supporter of Goldwater, seeing the candidate's "extremism" as a repudiation of his own policies as President. He found Goldwater's backhanded courting of anti-civil rights voters distasteful, and was skeptical of the Senator's competence in foreign policy. Yet with Nixon out of the contest, Ike viewed Goldwater as a better alternative than Rockefeller for the nomination.⁵³

During the convention a letter attributed to Pennsylvania Governor William Scranton was delivered to Goldwater, which read in part, "You have too often allowed the radical extremists to use you. . . .You have too often stood for irresponsibility in the serious question of racial holocaust."⁵⁴ Years later, Goldwater claimed that prior to

⁵³ Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), vol. 2, The President, 652-3.

⁵⁴ Goldwater, With No Apologies, 185. Scranton disavowed authorship of the letter, claiming that a member(s) of his staff drafted it without his knowledge or approval.

the revelation of the Scranton letter, the Pennsylvania Governor was his first choice for a running mate. Instead Goldwater turned to an obscure New York Congressman named William Miller, a Northern Catholic and a man with a reputation for being a ruthless partisan debater. Goldwater thought Miller could put Lyndon Johnson on the defensive during the campaign. As it turned out he never got the chance.⁵⁵

The so-called "extremist groups" to which Rockefeller and Scranton referred included the John Birch Society, which endorsed Goldwater's tough talk on Communism, and the Ku Klux Klan, which cheered the Senator's refusal to vote in favor of the 1964 Civil Rights bill, a move that also made him dear to the heart of unreconstructed Southern Rednecks.

Barry Goldwater was not personally racist. He had hired minorities at his department store, had contributed financially to the N.A.A.C.P. and the Urban League, and had voted in favor of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960. His refusal to endorse the 1964 Civil Rights bill rested on his commitment to states' rights. But Richard Rovere pointed out that his strength was with people who ignored his personal views and cheered his political record.⁵⁶ Therein was the difference between the candidate and the "movement" for whom he had become a symbol. Goldwater later claimed that his

⁵⁵ White, Making of the President, 214-5.

⁵⁶ Rovere, Goldwater Caper, 86.

failure to condemn these groups would have done more harm to his campaign than good: "The last thing conservatives needed was to begin a factional war by reading small minorities or individuals out of our ranks. We were struggling to strengthen ourselves, if not merely to survive."⁵⁷

Despite the wounding Goldwater received at the convention by his fellow party members, he easily secured the G.O.P. nomination. And despite the unlikeliness of a successful run at the presidency, Goldwater could not be completely dismissed at that particular time. He had arrived, in 1964, at a fortuitous moment in history, for it seemed that the liberal orthodoxy of the last 32 years had lost its vigor. The sense of malaise following the Eisenhower years, followed by the mounting political trouble of the Kennedy administration, allowed for the potential of widespread support for a conservative candidate. Moreover, labor unions, the backbone of Democratic party support, were looked upon by many as ineffective bureaucracies, and many of the Depression-spawned federal programs had lost their usefulness.⁵⁸

Goldwater tried to answer to charges that he was trapped in the past: "We conservatives are always blamed for wanting to go backwards. That is not true. . . everything that this administration is trying today has been tried not just in our own government, but in other governments. . . and they have

⁵⁷ Goldwater, Goldwater, 127.

⁵⁸ White, Making of the President, 213.

never succeeded."⁵⁹ He could not, however, swing such sentiment into his favor. The fact was that most Americans, despite their complaints, were satisfied with the current system, and Goldwater's doctrinaire ruminations about disbanding existing programs and privatizing Social Security were seen by many as a frightening alternative. William O'Neill observed that Goldwater, as a man of inherited wealth, little understood the complexities of the economic issues he confronted. "The average businessman felt more comfortable with Lyndon Johnson, a self-made millionaire who knew how the money was really made."⁶⁰

The contrast between Goldwater and Johnson was striking. The latter, despite outward behavior that would suggest a certain lack of refinement, was in fact a very complex individual. Remarking on their differing approaches, Johnson stated that "our separate experiences had shaped political philosophies in substantial opposition to each other."⁶¹ While Barry Goldwater had been a product of the Sunbelt Nouveau-riche, L.B.J. had been reared in privation as the son of a dirt farmer in the Texas hill country. He knew from personal experience the hardship and suffering caused by poverty. He had won elective office as a faithful supporter of F.D.R. and the New Deal, and spent the bulk of his

⁵⁹ Ibid., 337.

⁶⁰ O'Neill, Coming Apart, 114.

⁶¹ Lyndon Baines Johnson, The Vantage Point (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), 102.

political career--as a Congressman, Senator, and President--trying to get the federal government to acknowledge a greater share of social and economic responsibility toward individual people.

Even those who disagreed with Johnson's convictions admitted that he was exceedingly shrewd in the arena of politics. Whereas Barry Goldwater espoused old-fashioned virtues that categorized issues and people as strictly "good" or "evil", L.B.J. understood that everyone carried shadings of both. He saw no "all good" or "all bad" in anyone, and this allowed him more political range. He surrounded himself with people ranging from respected Democratic Senator Hubert Humphrey to dubious Texas crony Bobby Baker and used them to his advantage.⁶² Reflecting back on the campaign, Johnson said that he captured the political center because Goldwater was too far right and made no attempt to appeal to other political factions. As a consequence, L.B.J. saw an opportunity to seek a mandate for his social programs. He sought to give the voters a "choice not between conservatism and 'stand-patism' but between programs of social retreat and programs of social progress."⁶³

On November 3, 1964, voters overwhelmingly elected Lyndon Johnson to continue as President of the United States by a margin of forty-three million votes to Barry Goldwater's

⁶² White, Making of the President, 211.

⁶³ Johnson, Vantage Point, 103.

twenty-seven million. Johnson's showing in the electoral college was even more convincing: 486 to 52. Five of the six states that went for Goldwater (Arizona was the exception) were located in the Deep South, where the Republican party profited due to white backlash over the civil rights revolution. Election day had also proven costly for Republicans in Congress. The G.O.P. lost thirty-eight seats in the House of Representatives and two in the Senate. At the time, it appeared that Barry Goldwater's call for extremism in the defense of liberty had proven to be a very disastrous vice for the Republican party.

CHAPTER II

"I AM NOT A SOMETIME REPUBLICAN"

Following Barry Goldwater's massive electoral defeat, political commentators--including many conservative intellectual pundits--were quick to analyze the reasons behind the failure. Much of the blame was levelled at the candidate's own incompetence. Some, like Russell Kirk and conservative political scientist Willmoore Kendall, had long deplored Goldwater's singular obsession with economics, individual initiative, and strict interpretation of the Constitution.¹ Even William F. Buckley acknowledged that while a conservative tried to block most new expansions of "State" authority, he stopped short of a "doctrinaire application of the capitalist paradigm to every sphere."² Critics also stressed that his political record on civil rights hurt him tremendously. Had he voted in favor of the 1964 Civil Rights bill, he could have discussed the issue without coming off as a racist. In a similar vein Theodore White argued that had Goldwater forthrightly addressed the

¹ Willmoore Kendall, The Conservative Mind (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1963), xi; Russell Kirk, A Program for Conservatives (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1954), 6.

² Nash, Conservative Intellectual, 323.

misunderstandings over issues like nuclear energy and social security when they first surfaced, he could have avoided much of the media assault he endured throughout the campaign.³ Richard Rovere observed that Goldwater's political philosophy contradicted his campaign rhetoric. The most glaring example was the candidate's proposal to use the federal government to ensure "law and order." He would have had difficulty reconciling this approach with his states' rights principles. As a result a Goldwater government might well have been paralyzed by one constitutional crisis after another.⁴

All of the preceding arguments highlighted the fact that Barry Goldwater, appeared to be not a candidate with credible alternatives to the current system, but a cantankerous reactionary who could not make his agenda relevant to the lives of everyday people. Chief among the Goldwater critics in this respect was Clinton Rossiter, who held the candidate's conservative credentials suspect from the outset. People like Goldwater, who "favor disbanding current programs and . . . radical means to alter the philosophical bent of government" were what Rossiter termed "pseudo-conservatives."⁵ Rossiter, like White, believed that a conservative must adapt his agenda to the realities of twentieth-century life rather than "roll back the social process to the time at which his countrymen

³ White, Making of the President, 344-5.

⁴ Rovere, Goldwater Caper, 136-7.

⁵ Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 185.

first went foolishly astray."⁶ This was a notion any Burkean conservative held dear. Moreover, Rossiter argued that political authority was too important in the postwar world to cling to the naive assumption that "the best government is the least and the least government the best."⁷

Goldwater's grass-roots strength remained strong in spite of his defeat, as evidenced by the enormous amount of mail he continued to receive. While it is not unusual for national political candidates to get a lot of mail, the tone of much of Goldwater's correspondence reveals quite a bit about the type of support that he generated. Shortly after the election, a retired Air Force major general had written stating that "We lost the battle but we must win the war! But it is imperative that we have your leadership. There just isn't anyone else who can do it. I am convinced that you can lead us to victory."⁸ Another person wrote to warn that those who supported the Goldwater crusade "cannot camp with the enemy and be comfortable. . . .We cannot bargain with the enemy and hope to survive."⁹ This person's "enemies" list included Republicans Rockefeller and Scranton, New York Senator Jacob Javits, and Michigan Governor George Romney, all of whom were,

⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁷ Ibid., 35.

⁸ Major General Frederic E. Glantzberg, U.S.A.F. (retired) to Goldwater, November 16, 1964, Barry Goldwater Papers, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1964-5), Microfilm.

⁹ A.G. Blackmon to Goldwater, December 19, 1964, Goldwater Papers.

in varying degrees, more liberal than Goldwater. These were exactly the kinds of statements that made prominent Republicans and conservative intellectuals apprehensive about supporting Goldwater. He appealed to people who were not content to reform the existing state of affairs. Such people saw the campaign as a war, with Goldwater's victory presaging a revolution in the philosophy of government and a retooling of the social and economic order of the nation. Their allegiance was to the candidate, not the party.¹⁰

If Goldwater was not quite so personally militant as his followers, he did nothing to alleviate the shrillness of their crusade. Years before Goldwater became a household name, Russell Kirk warned of such a phenomenon, stating that "Conservatism is not an ideology. . . .It does not breed fanatics. It does not try to excite the enthusiasm of a secular religion." Rather, conservatives "seek, reasonably and prudently, to reconcile the best in the wisdom of our ancestors with the change which is essential to a vigorous social existence."¹¹

Despite his overwhelming defeat, Goldwater did manage to gather a considerable number of votes. Two questions need to be addressed, however. First, how many of those votes were directly for Goldwater? Second, would a different candidate have fared any better? Look magazine writers Lewis Bean and

¹⁰ Viereck, Conservatism, 146; White, Making of the President, 90; Schlesinger, Elections, 3885.

¹¹ Kirk, Program, 6.

Roscoe Drummond surmised that all but about two or three million were votes not for Goldwater, but for the Republican party. Goldwater's vote tally in the South, despite an active campaign strategy aimed at that region, was actually worse than the combined votes of Thomas Dewey and Strom Thurmond in 1948. Bean and Drummond suspected that had a more "traditional" candidate been nominated, he would have gotten more votes (possibly up to 32-33 million) and hypothesized that the party could rebuild if it did not "further alienate its large body of unwavering supporters by chasing after the fractionable rainbow of the extreme right." They agreed with Arthur Schlesinger that the country had no particular affection for Lyndon Johnson, and that Goldwater's support was "deep but narrow," while Johnson's had been "broad but quite shallow."¹²

In spite of his defeat, Goldwater's strength at local and state levels remained strong. More importantly, he had forced the Republican party to examine its own philosophical principles. Between 1940 and 1960 the party's presidential nominees, Wendell Willkie, Thomas Dewey, and Dwight

¹² Louis Bean and Roscoe Drummond, "How Many Votes Does Goldwater Own?" Look 29 (March 3, 1965): 75-6. The way the authors determined this is rather complex. Of seventy million voters in 1964, 51 percent were Democrats, 29 percent were Republicans, and 20 percent were Independents. That left the G.O.P. with twenty million of the seventy million active voters. Fifteen percent of these named Goldwater as their first choice; the other 85 percent were split among Nixon, Romney, Lodge, and Scranton. Therefore, Bean and Drummond concluded that Goldwater's personal vote total was only about three million.

Eisenhower, were able to bring the competing ideological factions together without, in the words of columnist David Danzig, "undue doctrine or commitment."¹³ Whatever doubts the leading conservative intellectuals had about Goldwater's grasp of that particular philosophy, his campaign enabled the Republican party to set itself apart from the Democrats. In addition, he had brought an infusion of young people and money into the G.O.P.

The Republican party was faced with a dilemma. G.O.P. officials knew the party could not have Goldwaterites in major leadership posts, but their strength was such that they could not be drummed out of the party.¹⁴ In spite of the nature and extent of the recent defeat, both the candidate and the party needed to work together. A challenge to Goldwater's authority as party leader came immediately following the election, when G.O.P. Chairman Dean Burch was pressured to step down. Goldwater fought hard in behalf of his friend Burch, but in so doing only managed to anger his Republican colleagues more. One wrote to say that his continued support of Burch was "unfortunate."¹⁵ Another stated that Goldwater's intransigence in this matter was preventing the unity that

¹³ David Danzig, "Conservatism After Goldwater," Commentary 39 (March, 1965): 31.

¹⁴ Rovere, Goldwater Caper, 176.

¹⁵ Maurice Van Nostrand to Goldwater, December 23, 1964, Goldwater Papers.

Republicans needed more than ever.¹⁶ Nonetheless, Burch resigned and was replaced by Ray Bliss, a man many thought would help move the party back toward the political center.

Barry Goldwater further disrupted the party by helping to found the Free Society Association (F.S.A.) in June 1965. The purpose of this organization, co-founded by former Goldwater aides Tony Smith and Karl Hess, was to do "research" for conservative causes and continue to keep the right-wing involved in the national political process through the publishing of "The New Federalist Papers" as well as other articles that stressed the conservative political view.¹⁷ It was also meant to provide an "organizational vehicle" to maintain Goldwater's grass-roots control of the Republican party delegate selection process in upcoming elections, give financial backing to conservative candidates, and keep control of money raised by the Goldwater presidential campaign.¹⁸

The F.S.A. touched off a controversy within the G.O.P. Chairman Bliss thought it would divide the party at a time when Republicans needed to "present a unified front to the opposition."¹⁹ When Goldwater, speaking at an F.S.A.

¹⁶ Edward Janeway to Goldwater, January 4, 1965, Goldwater Papers.

¹⁷ Congressional Record, 89th Cong., 1st sess., 1965, 111, pt. 11: 14712.

¹⁸ Walter Dean Burnham, "Goldwater Rallies the Troops," Commonweal 82 (August 6, 1965): 552.

¹⁹ "When Goldwater Launched a New Group," U.S. News and World Report 64 (January 29, 1968): 60-3.

function, criticized the Council of Republican Organizations as an attempt to put forth "carbon copies of Democratic Party programs," even some of Goldwater's allies were upset, who stressed the need to "work within the Republican party."²⁰

Meanwhile, Lyndon Johnson used the magnitude of his election victory to push an unprecedented amount of Great Society legislation through the Democratically controlled 89th Congress. Medicare, the Voting Rights Act, Head Start, and environmental beautification acts were only a few of the programs to sail through Congress with little Republican opposition. The President's policies in regard to foreign affairs, specifically military action in the Dominican Republic and Vietnam, met with Republican approval. In 1964-65 the G.O.P. applauded what they thought were Johnson's efforts to fight Communism abroad.²¹

Now a private citizen (he had given up his Senate seat in order to run for President), Goldwater used the Free Society Association to assail the liberal colossus of the Great Society. In the spring of 1966 he spoke at an F.S.A. rally in Chicago and attacked Great Society legislation steamrolling through Congress as a "fast-moving, irresponsible nationalizing process that can bring only frustration, stagnation, loss of individuality and government imposed restraints." He accused liberals of shunning rational debate,

²⁰ Congressional Record, 89th Cong., 1st sess., 1965, 111, pt. 11: 11339,

²¹ Reinhard, Republican Right, 213, 15.

charging them with making conservatives "appear bigoted, anti-Semitic or just plain stupid" because they happen to espouse different points of view.²²

By 1966 the Republican party began to show signs of unity. Two years earlier the party was on the brink of disintegration following the Goldwater election debacle. Now the G.O.P. began putting aside its intraparty disputes to prepare for the critical off-year election. A decade earlier Clinton Rossiter stressed that conservatism must not be "as suspicious, gloomy, passive, and elitist as Conservatism in other countries; it can and must be more daring, hopeful, individualistic, and democratic."²³ In order to achieve this, conservatives needed to join the main body of Republicans to help formulate a program of alternatives to liberalism that were valid to contemporary life.²⁴ In addition, "conservatives" must dissociate from extremism and show, in the words of George Nash, "intellectual maturity instead of factionalism."²⁵

Barry Goldwater appeared up to the challenge, and put aside his penchant for factionalism to join the main body of leading Republicans. In 1966 he served as a member of the G.O.P. Coordinating Committee, which included such former

²² New York Times, May 5, 1966, 20.

²³ Buckley, Dream Walking, 91.

²⁴ Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 300.

²⁵ Nash, Conservative Intellectual, 292.

Goldwater nemeses as Eisenhower, Nixon, Rockefeller, Dewey, and Romney. The purpose of the Committee was to set party policy between national elections and to keep abreast of the Johnson administration. It supported G.O.P. congressional candidates and attacked L.B.J. for the expanding federal bureaucracy.²⁶

The 1966 election results showed the greatest Republican gains in twenty years. Author David Reinhard called it "the key year in the post-World War II history of the Republican Right," as many former Goldwater supporters won election over their more liberal opponents.²⁷ It was an occasion that marked a minor comeback for the Republican party, but perhaps more importantly, it also indicated the first tangible sign of eroding public support for the Johnson administration.

Arthur Schlesinger, a prominent liberal scholar and former Kennedy advisor, wrote that "liberalism" was a philosophy that was "humane, experimental and pragmatic; it has no sense of messianic mission and no faith that all problems have final solutions."²⁸ Lyndon Johnson may well have argued differently, as his Great Society increasingly made the federal government responsible for the social and economic well-being of the citizenry. Programs that had been

²⁶ New York Times, December 13, 1966; Goldwater, With No Apologies, 200.

²⁷ Reinhard, Republican Right, 216.

²⁸ Schlesinger, The Vital Center (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), xv.

necessary in the midst of the Great Depression thirty years before were by the mid-sixties, in many cases, bloated bureaucracies that failed to deliver the assistance they were designed to give. People were questioning the continuation--and expansion of--social welfare programs under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in the midst of economic prosperity. Political writer Kevin Phillips commented upon the decline of New Deal/Great Society liberalism by pointing out that by the mid-1960s "the Democratic Party fell victim to the ideological impetus of a liberalism which had carried it beyond programs taxing the few for the benefit of the many (the New Deal) to programs taxing the many on behalf of the few (the Great Society)." ²⁹

Many whites resented Great Society programs that they felt disproportionately aided blacks. "Civil rights" had been replaced by "Black Power." Rioting rocked cities during a series of "long hot summers," a manifestation of the disillusionment blacks felt over the Great Society's failure to meet their expectations. When whites fled in ever-increasing numbers to the safety of the suburbs, the left-leaning influence of the central cities declined. The typical suburbanite, said conservative writer M. Stanton Evans, was "more concerned about schools, roads, and law enforcement than he is about welfare programs, Medicare, and the war on

²⁹ Kevin P. Phillips, The Emerging Republican Majority (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1969), 37.

poverty."³⁰

Without Barry Goldwater's verbal recklessness to deflect attention from the Democratic administration's record, it had to answer directly to the voters. In 1966 many districts throughout the country that had gone overwhelmingly Democratic two years earlier now voted for the G.O.P. Especially dramatic in this respect were precincts in the Southern highlands. In 1964 voters there resented Goldwater's open collusion with the Deep South; two years later, due to their disenchantment with the Great Society and the Vietnam War, they voted solidly for Republican candidates.³¹

Goldwater claimed that the 1966 election results were a reflection of the "dissatisfaction with the candor with which this [Johnson] Administration is treating the American people" on issues like the economy, crime, and Vietnam.³² Author Michael Miles suggested, however, that Barry Goldwater was partly responsible for the Great Society that he criticized. His 1964 defeat, combined with losses in Congress, had allowed L.B.J. to move his programs through with little opposition. It was only after these programs began to be discredited by their failure to meet popular expectations, along with public dissatisfaction with the Vietnam War, that the Republican

³⁰ Evans, Future, 34, 36.

³¹ Phillips, Emerging, 259.

³² "Republican Party Pulled Itself Together," U.S. News and World Report 61 (November 11, 1966): 60-1.

party really gained any momentum.³³ Moreover, according to Johnson biographer Vaughn Bornet, Goldwater and Johnson had agreed not to discuss Vietnam during the 1964 election, thus suppressing national debate earlier in the conflict when the U.S. troop commitment was much lower.³⁴ By 1966, however, Goldwater heavily criticized Johnson's conduct of a "limited war" that placed too many restrictions on enemy targets for U.S. pilots without spelling out any specific plan (or timetable) for victory.

Interestingly, the primary benefactor of the G.O.P. revival was not Goldwater, but Richard Milhous Nixon. Nixon had introduced Goldwater at the 1964 G.O.P. convention but described himself as being "almost physically sick" upon hearing Goldwater's acceptance speech.³⁵ Nonetheless, Nixon had campaigned hard for the Goldwater/Miller ticket. He tried to be a conciliator between the candidate and the rest of the Republican party. Nixon had been disappointed that the Goldwater candidacy had brought the "extremist" label upon the G.O.P., and later tried to distance himself from the right-

³³ Miles, Odyssey, 299.

³⁴ Vaughn Davis Bornet, The Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1983), 110. Goldwater could have capitalized on the Vietnam issue during the 1964 election, as he felt Johnson was vulnerable to criticism stemming from the Kennedy administration's role in the murder of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963. He and Johnson agreed not to discuss the issue out of respect for national security and growing domestic unrest.

³⁵ Stephen E. Ambrose, Nixon (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), vol. 2, "The Triumph of a Politician 1962-1972," 54.

wing by proclaiming, "If being a liberal means federalizing everything, then I'm no liberal. If being a conservative means turning back the clock, denying problems that exist, then I'm no conservative."³⁶ Like so much else about Richard Nixon, his politics were hard to categorize.

Nixon refrained from joining the anti-Goldwater chorus that was heard in the wake of the 1964 election. For this Goldwater was very grateful, and as early as January 1965 he endorsed Nixon for the 1968 presidential nomination. Optimistic about Republican chances that year, Goldwater observed that "if Johnson continues to be the bumbling politician he's turning out to be. . .I think he can be beaten in 1968."³⁷

Goldwater and Nixon endured a long history together in national politics. Goldwater was elected to the Senate the same year Nixon became Vice-President. By the 1960s Goldwater had come to believe that Nixon was a duplicitous politician who lacked a firm commitment to conservative principles. An example was Nixon's appeasement of Nelson Rockefeller in 1960. Despite Goldwater's concerns about Nixon's character, however, he still did his best to further Nixon's quest for the presidency.

After his 1960 presidential defeat and his humiliating loss in the California gubernatorial race two years later,

³⁶ Reichley, Age of Change, 53.

³⁷ "How Goldwater Views 1968 and 1964," U.S. News and World Report 61 (September 12, 1966): 22.

Nixon briefly retired from public life. By 1964, however, he had returned to the political arena and over the next few years he carefully accumulated considerable political capital. In addition to stumping for Goldwater in 1964 when other party members treated the candidate like a political pariah, Nixon went out on the hustings for Republican candidates again in 1966. That year Nixon campaigned only for candidates in districts where the G.O.P. had lost close races in 1964. That way he could claim much of the credit for single-handedly reversing the Goldwater debacle, even though many seats would have returned to the Republican party without Nixon's help. He wrote a form letter to previously defeated candidates reminding them that it was "the drag on the top of the ticket" in 1964 that kept them from winning.³⁸ By 1968 he had amassed enough political clout to make another credible run for the presidency.

The man who suffered the most as a result of Nixon's resurrection was probably the most vigorous advocate of Goldwater conservatism since 1964, California Governor Ronald Reagan. Reagan's star had risen as a result of a 1964 campaign commercial promoting Goldwater. His explanation of Goldwater's principles was so thorough and articulate--much more so than the candidate's clumsy attempts to clarify his own positions--that party members instantly saw him as a potentially big political winner in his own right. After

³⁸ Ambrose, Nixon, vol. 2, 60, 81.

winning the California governorship in 1966 Reagan was considered presidential timber. In fact, the Young Americans for Freedom had shifted their allegiance to Reagan for the presidency at a time when Goldwater himself was calling for Nixon.³⁹ Of course, Goldwater, too, acknowledged Reagan as a political comer; he thought a Nixon/Reagan ticket in 1968 would be most attractive, but stuck with Nixon for the top spot because, first and foremost, "Nixon was a party man" and second, because he had allegedly been assured by Reagan that the latter was not going to be a candidate.⁴⁰

Ironically, Goldwater's defeat in 1964 had undermined a Reagan candidacy four years later due to the party's inevitable move toward the center following such a loss. Right-wing victories in Congress were one thing, but the viability of yet another right-wing candidate for the presidency was another matter. Besides, Reagan, as a relative newcomer to politics, had not accumulated enough party service to assure nomination, and this was probably the main reason why Goldwater preferred the more experienced Nixon.⁴¹

Goldwater's support of Nixon was important to the future of the right-wing, because the majority of delegates were the same people who had nominated the Arizona Senator himself four years earlier. This was confirmed by Edward P. Morgan of the

³⁹ New York Times, September 2, 1967, 10.

⁴⁰ New York Times, July 21, 1967, 14; October 2, 1967, 17.

⁴¹ Kolkey, New Right, 261.

A.F.L./C.I.O. News, who claimed that the G.O.P. was still in the hands of grass-roots operators who "lack political vision or experience, and who only see government as the enemy."⁴² These delegates came into the party as Goldwater supporters; their political champion still carried a lot of weight in the G.O.P. However, Nixon's hawkish approach to Vietnam compensated for his moderate domestic views in the eyes of many in the G.O.P. right. Nixon said of Goldwater supporters that "they don't like me, but they tolerate me."⁴³

One thing Goldwater made clear was that he was not about to support anyone who had turned his back on the ticket in 1964. This threat was aimed primarily at his intraparty nemesis, Nelson Rockefeller. Early in 1968 Goldwater made news when he proclaimed that "I and my fellow Conservatives of the Republican party want no part of Rockefeller as a candidate."⁴⁴ Personal feelings aside, Goldwater's reasons for not endorsing a Rockefeller candidacy were twofold. First, he felt he would alienate voters in Arizona at a time when he was seeking re-election to the Senate. Second, Goldwater's endorsement of the New York Governor would undermine his own strength nationally, as it would draw the wrath of his grass-roots supporters who still clung to power at local and state levels. In sum, Rockefeller would split

⁴² Congressional Record, 89th Cong., 2d sess., 1966, 112, pt. 19: 26121.

⁴³ Ambrose, Nixon, vol. 2, 61.

⁴⁴ New York Times, March 5, 1968, 25.

the party and lose, because the G.O.P. still had very powerful bastions of Goldwaterite strength that were holdovers from 1964.⁴⁵

At the Republican National Convention in 1968 Goldwater worked hard for Nixon and was instrumental in keeping Southern delegations in the Nixon fold. When it looked briefly as though Nixon might not get the nomination on the first ballot, Goldwater falsely announced that Ronald Reagan would release his delegates in exchange for the Vice-Presidential spot on the ticket, even though Reagan had already said he was not interested in the post.⁴⁶ In a speech to the convention Goldwater pleaded for party unity--the kind he could not achieve four years earlier--by saying that "we are not here to accuse and we are not here to divide," but, rather, "we are here to deliver a message to the future and to find a meaning for today."⁴⁷ Goldwater courted black support for the G.O.P., saying that "they have had enough of the promises of politics. They want a piece of the action. They must have it," and claimed that thirty years of unchecked liberal welfare statism had done little to further their fight for civil and economic

⁴⁵ New York Times, January 16, 1968, 38. Goldwater was forced to back down from his anti-Rockefeller stand in the name of party unity, and the next day issued a retraction of his comments, claiming that if certain (unnamed) candidates want to convince him of their commitment to conservative principles as important Republican ideals, "I can be convinced." New York Times, March 6, 1968, 33.

⁴⁶ Kolkey, New Right, 283.

⁴⁷ New York Times, August 6, 1968, 20.

equality. He stressed that "people power" and individual freedom were superior to "government power" and nameless numbers in a federal bureaucracy.⁴⁸

By supporting Nixon, Goldwater became concerned about the third party candidacy of Alabama Governor George Wallace. Wallace had stayed out of the 1964 race when Goldwater received the nomination, and although Goldwater and Wallace shared a number of views, namely "law and order" and a hard-line approach to Communism, the former believed that Wallace had "absolutely no chance" of winning. Votes that would otherwise go to Nixon would "go right down a rat hole" in a futile Wallace vote. The result would ensure a victory for Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey. Moreover, Goldwater believed that a Wallace candidacy would disrupt the two-party system, and such a fissure would pave the way for the type of ineffective coalition government that was practiced in Europe. Such a scenario was, of course, unlikely, but more to the point, Goldwater wanted to make his constituency loyal to the Republican party. If G.O.P. conservatives were unhappy, they should stay and work out their problems within the party. Splintering would make conservatism, and the party as a whole, weaker, while making the Democrats stronger.⁴⁹ No matter that Wallace was probably more ideologically aligned with the

⁴⁸ Congressional Record, 90th Cong., 2d sess., 1968, vol. 114, pt. 20: 25873-4.

⁴⁹ Barry Goldwater, "Don't Waste a Vote on Wallace," National Review 20 (October 22, 1968): 1060-1, 1079.

Arizona Senator than Nixon ever was. Allegiance to the party came first. "I am not a sometime Republican," Goldwater proclaimed in early 1968, and it was with his emphasis on party unity that Nixon was able to overcome Wallace's independent presidential bid that year.⁵⁰

Nixon's narrow triumph over Vice President Hubert Humphrey in November 1968 confirmed the success of a strategy initiated by the Goldwater campaign four years earlier: the South was the key to a Republican presidential victory. Even though George Wallace carried a few states in the Deep South, Nixon made significant inroads in that region to make his victory possible. The South was important because it was gaining population and, thus, in political power. In contrast the Northeast, long the bastion of liberal Democrats and progressive Republicans, was declining in population and influence. Even though Nixon himself supported the 1964 Civil Rights Act and opposed segregation, Goldwater's convention tactics, along with support from Southern Senators John Tower and Strom Thurmond, were instrumental in keeping the South in his camp.⁵¹

After such an overwhelming defeat just four years earlier, the Republican party's comeback was only slightly less amazing than that of Richard Nixon's. Barry Goldwater, far from being banished to political oblivion following his

⁵⁰ New York Times, March 5, 1968, 22.

⁵¹ Evans, Future, x, xii, xiii, 256-7; Phillips, Emerging, 42.

own defeat, had used his considerable leverage to rally the party to victory behind Nixon. In so doing he had managed to convince his own supporters--the legions of people that had joined the G.O.P. as Goldwaterites--that loyalty to party was just as important as loyalty to a particular faction. Indeed, in tracing his evolution over the previous four years, this is a lesson that he himself seemed to learn above all else.

The glow of triumph was to fade all too quickly, however. Despite having doubts about his character, Goldwater had been instrumental in electing Richard Nixon President of the United States. In this endeavor he eschewed other candidates whose viewpoints more closely matched his own for a number of reasons: party unity, personal gratitude for previous support, and Nixon's previous political experience. Despite all things, Goldwater believed that now the federal government could be overhauled into a more conservative instrument of policy, and Nixon had courted conservatives to the extent that they felt comfortable he could accomplish such a task. For all the Arizonan's hopes, nonetheless, Richard Nixon turned out to be an embarrassment to Goldwater, the Republican party, and conservatism. Recollecting years hence, Goldwater stated bitterly, "perhaps I expected too much."⁵²

⁵² Goldwater, With No Apologies, 209.

CHAPTER III

"HE WAS THE MOST DISHONEST INDIVIDUAL I EVER MET IN MY LIFE

Richard Nixon seemed, on the surface at least, eminently qualified for the office of President of the United States. He had been elected to the House of Representatives in 1946, to the Senate in 1950, and had served two terms as Eisenhower's Vice-President. His losses to John Kennedy for the presidency in 1960 and to Edmund "Pat" Brown for the governorship of California in 1962 appeared to end his political career, but he returned to the spotlight in 1964 by supporting Barry Goldwater's presidential candidacy when other prominent Republicans--Rockefeller, Romney, and Scranton among them--had disavowed the Arizona Senator's campaign. This effort was not forgotten by either Goldwater or his supporters. Nixon's similar show of support for Republican congressional candidates in 1966 (many of whom were Goldwaterites) earned him renewed respect within the G.O.P. as a loyal party man. He was also a man to whom many political favors were owed, and he redeemed them by getting solid support from the G.O.P. right (Barry Goldwater chief among them) for his presidential run in 1968.

Nixon was not, however, a Goldwater conservative. He was

pragmatic rather than doctrinaire. The Nixon administration, at least in part, accepted the expansion of government responsibly as evolved from the New Deal, which the President himself advanced during his first term in areas like the environment and federal spending for social welfare programs. Nixon thought the New Frontier and the Great Society had good intentions, but their bureaucracy, in the words of James Reichley, "undermined fundamental relationships within our federal system."¹ Nixon sought to enhance local and state control of many of those agencies. Although he wanted to get rid of the many Kennedy/Johnson holdovers in the federal government, Nixon remained in favor of the social progress the New Frontier/Great Society agencies presumably stood for. One notable difference between him and his predecessors, however, was that Nixon often refrained from using the federal government to enforce civil rights.²

Goldwater, who had successfully regained his Senate seat in 1968, publicly supported the President, but privately he had many concerns over the way Nixon was dealing with important matters of state. The Senator felt that Nixon was paying too little attention to domestic affairs, particularly the economy. Goldwater was troubled that the President had imposed wage and price controls in 1971, something Nixon said he would never do. Nixon was also moving too slowly in

¹ Reichley, Age of Change, 50-1, 169, 409.

² Reg Murphy and Hal Gulliver, The Southern Strategy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 22.

removing the J.F.K./L.B.J. holdovers from government positions, an alarming fact that was compounded by Nixon's addition of several Democrats to top administration positions. Among them were Henry Kissinger, a former Kennedy consultant who became National Security Advisor (later Secretary of State), and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, selected to be a domestic affairs advisor.³ Nevertheless, Goldwater publicly supported his President, even to the extent of admonishing those on the Republican right who were criticizing Nixon's actions: "Let me ask you what you have to offer in his place."⁴

Privately, however, Goldwater had very serious concerns about the administration's performance. He tried to convey to Nixon what his constituents in Arizona were telling him; they wanted lower taxes, less federal spending, and less government interference. But Nixon remained aloof from any suggestions Goldwater offered. "I got the impression that he thought that Arizona was atypical and that I was too blunt and too positive in my opinions," Goldwater wrote later.⁵ Indeed, even getting an appointment with the President was often an exercise in futility, for a wall of isolation had been erected around Nixon by his two top aides, H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, a wall, Goldwater believed, that could not have

³ Goldwater, Goldwater, 257-9. Reinhard, Republican Right, 222.

⁴ "How Goldwater Sees It," National Review 23 (September 24, 1971): 27.

⁵ Goldwater, With No Apologies, 215.

been built without Nixon's "knowledge and approval."⁶

By 1971, an uncomfortable friction had arisen between Nixon and Goldwater fueled in part by the former's apparent lack of direction. That year Goldwater supported Senator Hugh Scott's reelection as minority leader at the request of the President, even though the Arizona Senator felt that Scott was too closely allied with liberals in matters like government spending. Later Nixon wanted Scott dumped in favor of Howard Baker. Goldwater had wanted Baker from the start, but said to Nixon that the commitments for keeping Scott had already been made.⁷

Nineteen-seventy-one was also the year that Nixon announced his support for the Family Assistance Plan, a welfare reform proposal that gave a guaranteed income to qualified families. This program was vigorously promoted by Moynihan. James Reichley speculated that Nixon supported the measure because he identified with the working poor from his own childhood experience of having grown up as the son of a poor lemon farmer in California.⁸ Nonetheless, the plan, together with a growing budget deficit and the imposition of wage and price controls, became symbolic of the alleged "leftward drift" of the administration, and only helped alienate Nixon further from the conservative Republican

⁶ Goldwater, Goldwater, 257-9.

⁷ Goldwater, With No Apologies, 215. Apparently Nixon feared Scott would line up congressional support against him in 1972.

⁸ Reichley, Age of Change, 138-43.

constituency that was vital to his election. Still, Goldwater continued to maintain his silence, perhaps fearing a resurgence of intraparty fighting that characterized the G.O.P. in 1964.⁹

Barry Goldwater greeted the Nixon Administration's handling of foreign policy with mixed emotions. He praised Nixon for being the first President to begin bringing home ground forces from Vietnam, calling his progress "a remarkably fine job."¹⁰ He showed concern, however, for Nixon's initiation of detente with the Soviet Union. Any negotiation with the U.S.S.R., Goldwater felt, amounted to de-facto acceptance of the Communist doctrine and the current state of affairs in Eastern Europe.¹¹ Nixon was still an anti-Communist, but he knew the American people were growing tired of the sacrifices needed to keep Communism at bay. He realized, however, that the Communist states of China and the Soviet Union could be used against each other. Thus, in his relations with the Soviet Union and China Nixon pursued a conciliatory yet not altruistic approach. Goldwater was well aware of the potential impact the Sino-Soviet split could have on U.S. security but, according to Reichley, he did not favor cutting military spending, and he would have proceeded much more slowly than Nixon, since he still assumed that Communism

⁹ Reinhard, Republican Right, 225.

¹⁰ Congressional Record, 91st Cong., 1st sess., 1969, vol. 115, pt 22: 29568.

¹¹ Reinhard, Republican Right, 223.

had hegemonic ambitions.¹²

Goldwater was particularly disturbed about Nixon's overture toward formal relations with China. Even though on the Senate floor he supported Nixon, stating that there was "nothing devious or evil" in the President's visit to China, privately it took repeated assurances from Henry Kissinger to convince Goldwater that negotiations with China were in America's best interests. The Senator objected to the possibility of China's admission to the United Nations, which he prophesied would be "a serious blow to that organization."¹³ It was the future of the democratic government in Taiwan, however, that most concerned Goldwater. Republican conservatives had threatened to abandon Nixon should any harm come to Taiwan's government as a result of agreements struck with the Chinese. When the Shanghai Communique was released reaffirming China's sovereignty over Taiwan and ordered United States troop withdrawals from it, Goldwater surprisingly continued to support the administration, citing assurances he had received from Nixon and Kissinger about the long-range survival of the island. This attitude was "utterly mystifying" to William F. Buckley, who had consistently been one of Goldwater's staunchest defenders. In The National Review Buckley castigated Goldwater for his response to the Communique, saying it was

¹² Reichley, Age of Change, 106, 129.

¹³ Congressional Record, 92d Cong., 1st sess., 1971, vol. 117, pt. 27: 34991-2.

"bad enough to lose Taiwan. The prospect of losing Barry Goldwater is insupportable, and terribly, shatteringly sad."¹⁴ For the sake of party unity, Goldwater kept his own objections to himself. Later, he admitted feeling betrayed by the Administration. In his personal diary he confessed, "If I cannot believe my President, then I have lost all my faith in men, friends, and in my country's leadership."¹⁵

The advice Goldwater gave to the President just prior to the 1972 election was to stay at home and "be presidential, and pursue an honorable peace in Vietnam."¹⁶ The Senator made about a dozen appearances in support of the national ticket. After Nixon's overwhelming defeat of Democrat George McGovern, Goldwater met with the President at Camp David. At that time he stressed that given such an electoral mandate, Nixon should "take full control of the federal government."¹⁷ In other meetings the Senator suggested that Nixon restructure the armed forces to allow for more efficiency and less competition among the four branches.

Nixon wrote in his memoirs that he had originally planned his second term to be responsible for "having advocated the most significant reforms of any administration since that of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932." What he envisioned, however, was

¹⁴ William F. Buckley, "Senator Goldwater's Reassurance," National Review vol. 24, pt. 1 (March 31, 1972): 365.

¹⁵ Goldwater, Goldwater, 259.

¹⁶ Goldwater, With No Apologies, 246, 247.

¹⁷ Ibid., 248; Reichley, Age of Change, 227.

quite different than the New Deal. Rather, Nixon wanted to reverse the agglomeration of government power, thus making it "leaner" yet "stronger."¹⁸ The President promised Goldwater he would trim the governmental bureaucracy, get rid of the Kennedy/Johnson appointees, and reorganize the State Department, all of which he hesitated to do in his first term because the narrowness of his 1968 victory prevented him from confronting an entrenched Democratic congress.¹⁹ Goldwater later believed that it was, in fact, the closeness of that election that led the Nixon administration to commit the political "excesses" in the 1972 contest, excesses that ultimately led to the exposure of the Watergate scandal and the destruction of the Nixon presidency.²⁰

Goldwater's role during the Watergate crisis defies easy explanation. On the one hand, he urged the President from the very beginning to tell the truth about the affair. The longer Nixon delayed in doing that, the more the crisis would damage not only the reputation of the Republican party, but, more importantly, the ability of the government to function effectively both domestically and internationally. On the other hand, Goldwater consistently supported Nixon on the Senate floor, believing until the last minute that, despite the President's shoddy handling of the affair, he was innocent

¹⁸ Richard Nixon, R.N. The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (New York: Warner Brothers, 1978), vol. 2, 275.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 276.

²⁰ Goldwater, Goldwater, 261.

of the most serious charges. This attitude led writer Peter Steinfelds to label the Senator's criticism of Nixon's actions "tactical, not fundamental."²¹

The Nixon administration had managed to avoid major media exposure of the Watergate burglary until after the 1972 election, but by January 1973, it had started to receive increasing attention in the press. Barry Goldwater was one of the first members of the Republican party to express concern over the affair, citing its potential impact on the national elections in 1974 and 1976. Nonetheless, the Senator strongly believed Nixon himself "knew nothing at all about any matter in relation to the so-called Watergate affair. I believe he is completely honest."²² Recalling his time as a presidential candidate, Goldwater stated that he was often unaware of his subordinates' activities. Still, Goldwater was upset that the President was not taking any steps to publicly clear-up the growing scandal within his administration. "Its beginning to smell like Teapot Dome," Goldwater exclaimed in April 1973.²³

His support of Nixon personally notwithstanding, Goldwater co-sponsored a resolution in May 1973 calling on the President to appoint a special prosecutor to handle the case. He later called Nixon's selection of Archibald Cox to the post

²¹ Peter Steinfelds, "The Goldwater Myth," Commonweal 99 (February 1, 1974): 431.

²² Congressional Record, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 1973, 119, pt. 11: 13722.

²³ Stephen E. Ambrose, Nixon (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), vol. 3 "Ruin and Recovery 1973-1990," 101-2.

"politically stupid." Cox, in the Senator's mind, was an unabashed liberal who was too partisan in his staff selection. Goldwater maintained that "Nixon had to fire him."²⁴ In an attempt to block release of certain tapes of White House discussions, Nixon finally ordered Cox dismissed On October 20, 1973. Refusing to do Nixon's dirty work, Attorney General Elliot Richardson and his deputy, William Ruckelshaus, resigned to protest. Following this incident, known as the Saturday Night Massacre, Goldwater feared that "the possibility of determining the truth of Watergate was lost forever."²⁵

Goldwater first addressed the possibility of resignation or impeachment in an interview with Time in the late spring of 1973. While the Senator maintained that he was satisfied that the President "knew nothing at the inception" of the Watergate burglary, he was not so sure that Nixon was innocent of covering up the affair. "If he didn't lie he'll probably be O.K.," but if he were lying about his involvement, impeachment would be likely, and resignation almost a certainty. "There ought to be a complete clarification. . . . Everything out. Right now," Goldwater stated.²⁶

Not long after this interview, Goldwater accused the press of showing a lack of concern for national security in

²⁴ Goldwater, Goldwater, 262.

²⁵ Ibid., 262.

²⁶ Hays Gorey, "Goldwater on Nixon's Prospects," Time 101 (May 28, 1973): 19.

its Watergate coverage, citing as examples the New York Times and the Washington Post. To support this assertion, Goldwater pointed out that in 1962, when the Saturday Evening Post published excerpts from National Security Council meetings, both the Times and the Post denounced the "breach of security." Under the current crisis, however, Daniel Ellsberg was portrayed as a hero for leaking the Pentagon Papers to the press. The disregard for national security was compounded by what Goldwater viewed as a liberal-leaning bias within the national media.²⁷

Such an accusation was understandable, considering the treatment he was given by the press during the course of his own political career. His outburst over this issue was ironic, however, since in the early 1970s Barry Goldwater gained a newfound respectability in the eyes of many in the national press and broadcast media. No less a figure than Walter Cronkite commented that Goldwater, previously "ridiculed as an anachronism," was now a well-respected statesman who was "the voice of moderation and reason" during the Watergate crisis due to his penchant for putting honesty and integrity above partisan politics.²⁸ Some writers saw evidence in the Pentagon Papers, released two years earlier, that tended to support Goldwater's earlier positions. In

²⁷ Congressional Record, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 1973, 119, pt. 14: 18008.

²⁸ William F. Buckley, "Tribute to Goldwater," National Review 25 (November 9, 1973): 1265.

1971, a journalist for Roll Call claimed that the Papers showed that Goldwater was right in saying that L.B.J. had increased U.S. involvement in Vietnam in 1965, even though Johnson said he would never do such a thing in his 1964 presidential campaign. Goldwater was hawkish but truthful, while Johnson deceitfully portrayed himself as a man of peace. The writer observed that "only Barry Goldwater emerges from these Pentagon Papers as an honest man. It is indeed ironic to see the newspapers which once sought to destroy him now admit that in a cynical age he was a man who told the truth."²⁹

By June of 1973 Barry Goldwater was becoming very alarmed about President Nixon's lack of leadership. On the fifth of that month he personally typed a letter to the President criticizing him for his continued isolation, for his failure to resolve the Watergate crisis, and for his lack of G.O.P. leadership. He reminded Nixon that "you are the leader of the party and you have to act like it."³⁰ Five weeks later Nixon assistant Bryce Harlow called on Goldwater to ask for advice on what the President should do. The Senator replied that Nixon should appear as a witness before the Senate Watergate Committee. On the Senate floor, however, Goldwater contradicted himself, claiming that the President had the right to "handle the Watergate charges in whatever manner he

²⁹ Congressional Record, 92d Cong., 1st sess., 1971, 117, pt. 17: 22564-5.

³⁰ Goldwater, Goldwater, 261-5.

chooses." He claimed that there was a precedent for Nixon's refusal to personally appear before the committee: President Johnson had refused to testify before Congress over an issue concerning one of his former staff members. Goldwater evidently supported Nixon's actions to the extent that he had a newspaper editorial inserted into the Congressional Record declaring that the President of the United States should not have to "submit to the extralegal processes that are used in congressional committee hearings."³¹ Publicly, at least, Senator Goldwater still supported the integrity of President Nixon.

On October 10, 1973 Watergate was temporarily overshadowed by the resignation of Vice-President Spiro T. Agnew, who faced several charges of conspiracy, extortion, and bribery and who pleaded nolo contendere to a charge of income tax evasion. The Agnew scandal was particularly troubling to Goldwater because of the way in which it was handled by the White House. In his memoirs the Senator accused Haldeman and Ehrlichman of leaking damning allegations against the Vice-President in order to take the glare off of Watergate, perhaps believing that Agnew's resignation might persuade critics that the Administration had suffered enough. Moreover, Nixon had refused to meet with Agnew to hear his side of the story after allegations against the latter were made public.³² Nixon,

³¹ Congressional Record, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 1973, 119, pt. 19: 24881; Goldwater, With No Apologies, 254.

³² Goldwater, Goldwater, 261-5.

writing later, claimed that he was sympathetic to Agnew but did not see any way that he could help him. He stated, quite accurately, that "anything we did to try to help might. . . be made to appear that we were trying to cover up for him."³³

Goldwater's personal opinion of Agnew was uncompromising. If the Vice-President were to be indicted, Goldwater believed he should step down. But Goldwater was troubled by the handling of the case. He felt that the Vice-President should have been charged formally before he was tried in the press.³⁴ The whole affair, nonetheless, left the Senator rather bitter, as he observed that it was "a case study in the contradictory nature of Richard Nixon. He quickly deserted Agnew while asking me and millions of other Americans not to flee him in his hours of trial and torment."³⁵

The selection of a new Vice-President of impeccable personal and political credentials was vital, considering the magnitude of the Watergate crisis by the fall of 1973. Nixon's first choice for a replacement was former Texas Governor John B. Connally. Connally had served briefly as Secretary of the Treasury during Nixon's first term and was a man well qualified to hold the office vacated by Agnew, but Goldwater warned the President against the nomination. As a newcomer to the G.O.P., Connally would be opposed by many

³³ Nixon, Memoirs, 344.

³⁴ "In His Heart He Knows He's Right," Newsweek 82 (October 1, 1973): 29.

³⁵ Goldwater, Goldwater, 265.

within the party, particularly the right-wing, who found his conservative credentials suspect. Democrats, too, would probably line up against him because of his switch in party affiliation.³⁶ Goldwater personally favored either Ronald Reagan or Republican Party Chairman George Bush for the job, but he was satisfied with the selection of House Minority Leader Gerald Ford.³⁷ Ford, who had served in Congress for over twenty-five years, had Republican tendencies in the mold of Robert Taft, but was more internationalist. He had unenthusiastically supported the Goldwater ticket in 1964. Ford once claimed that "conservatism has always meant more to me than simply sticking up for private property and free enterprise. It has also meant defending our heritage and preserving our values."³⁸ Goldwater himself claimed that he did not want the vice-presidency, "but I would have taken it." Nixon, apparently, never asked him.³⁹

Following the departure of Spiro Agnew and the Saturday Night Massacre, the call for either impeachment or resignation began to be heard more frequently in both Congress and the press, but Goldwater still publicly gave Nixon the benefit of the doubt. He thought such actions were premature, since it would "cause a partisan nightmare of unbelievable

³⁶ Reichley, Age of Change, 282.

³⁷ Goldwater, With No Apologies, 263.

³⁸ Reichley, Age of Change, 22-6, 286.

³⁹ New York Times, October 17, 1973, 35.

proportions." With Congress stalling in the confirmation of Gerald Ford, a Nixon resignation at that time would have resulted in House Speaker Carl Albert, a Democrat, becoming President. Goldwater speculated that this was precisely what the Democrats in Congress were trying to achieve. He implored the Democratic leadership to put an end to the partisan fighting over Watergate so that Congress could turn its attention to more pressing domestic problems like the economy and the energy crisis.⁴⁰

Goldwater's public defense of Nixon continued on into 1974. Appearing on "Meet the Press" in January he claimed that the public had "forgotten Watergate" and was focused on more serious problems. He dismissed Nixon's dismal public approval rating of twenty-nine percent by pointing out that Harry Truman suffered a similar lack of public confidence, yet was "probably the best President we had this century."⁴¹ In regard to the White House tapes that could implicate the President's involvement in the Watergate cover-up, Goldwater cited reasons of national security in supporting Nixon's right to offer only "edited transcripts" of them rather than to obey a Congressional subpoena for the tapes themselves. He asserted that he "would follow the same procedure" under similar circumstances. As late as July 1974 the Senator

⁴⁰ "Some Republicans Want Nixon to Quit," U.S. News and World Report 75 (December 31, 1973): 26.

⁴¹ Congressional Record, 93rd Cong., 2d sess., 1974, 120, pt. 1: 37.

proclaimed that Watergate was "being blown out of all proportion as a news story" at a time "when this nation is desperately in need of . . . legislation to handle more urgent problems."⁴²

By the end of that July, Senator Goldwater began to feel differently toward Nixon's responsibility in the Watergate scandal. On the twelfth of that month, the House Judiciary committee released thousands of pages of evidence gleaned from the tape transcripts. Although the June 23, 1972 tape--the one clearly establishing Nixon's role in the Watergate cover-up--had yet to surface, it was clear by that point that Nixon had been involved. As the Committee voted to bring three articles of impeachment against the President, Goldwater conceded that the federal government "would be at a standstill unless and until [Nixon] left office."⁴³

The Supreme Court finally ordered Nixon to relinquish the tapes in United States v. Nixon on July 24, 1974. On August 5th Dean Burch, the former Republican Party Chairman and now White House staffer, handed Goldwater a two-page statement scheduled for that afternoon's release confirming Nixon's role in the Watergate cover-up. It was at that moment what little faith Barry Goldwater had in Richard Nixon was shattered. Although he said that he preferred the President to resign, Goldwater decided that he would vote to convict Nixon if

⁴² Congressional Record, 93rd Cong., 2d sess., 1974, 120, pt. 18: 23498.

⁴³ Goldwater, Goldwater, 274.

called upon to do so in an impeachment proceeding, which the Senator now thought would be eminent.⁴⁴

Regardless of his personal feelings for Richard Nixon, Goldwater was determined to see the President of the United States receive a fair trial in Congress. That same day, he had an excerpt of Judge Alexander Simpson, Jr.'s Federal Impeachments inserted into the Congressional Record. This book examined the rules of impeachment proceedings based upon the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and English common law. It also set forth the legal precedents emanating from President Andrew Johnson's impeachment trial in 1868. The Senator stressed that Nixon's rights in an impeachment trial were the same as those delegated to him in a regular criminal trial, and admonished the Senate to "adhere to principles of fairness and justice." He argued that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, as presiding officer of an impeachment trial, should be able to vote on matters of evidence and procedure so as to not make the President unduly dependent upon the whims of Congress. Also, as a national security precaution, television cameras should be barred from the Senate chamber during the proceedings.⁴⁵

On August 6th, after a high-level G.O.P. policy meeting, party leaders decided it would be necessary for Goldwater to

⁴⁴ Theodore H. White, Breach of Faith (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1975), 34.

⁴⁵ Congressional Record, 93rd Cong., 2d sess., 1974, 120, pt. 20: 26658, 26894-5.

go to the White House to impress upon the embattled President his dire situation. The Senator had been asked several times over the previous few months to "talk" to Nixon, but had always refused, claiming that it was not his place to tell the President of the United States anything. Now, however, he felt the time had come to confront Nixon directly, and so the following day Goldwater, along with Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott and House Minority Leader John Rhodes, met with him in the Oval Office. Goldwater was particularly concerned that the President was underestimating the gravity of the situation and the problems that would arise, both domestically and internationally, from his continuation in office. However, Goldwater and his colleagues had to give the impression that Nixon alone was responsible for decisions regarding the future of his presidency. It must not appear that the congressional leadership was trying to force Nixon out of the White House. Nevertheless, they had to make it clear to the President how futile it would be for him to fight on. When Nixon asked him how many Senate votes he could expect in the event of an impeachment trial, Goldwater replied, "ten at most, maybe less." Moreover, the Senator made it clear that he personally was leaning toward voting for conviction on Article II: abuse of power.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Goldwater, Goldwater, 279. Goldwater claimed to have slightly exaggerated the lack of Senate support for the President, but felt he had to make the futility of Nixon's situation clear in order to dissuade him from fighting on. Also Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, The Final Days (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 413-6.

Following their meeting with Nixon, Goldwater, Scott, and Rhodes met with reporters, but they gave only vague details about their conversation. Later, Goldwater phoned Katherine Graham, owner of the Washington Post, and pleaded with her not to print any provocative statements that might persuade the President to fight on; simply let Nixon resign without reinforcing the fact that he was politically finished. To Goldwater's relief, Graham acquiesced.⁴⁷ Nixon announced his resignation to a national television audience the next evening, August 8th, with his departure from office to formally occur at noon the following day, August 9th, 1974. Reflecting years later over the whole ordeal, Barry Goldwater wrote in his memoirs that Richard Nixon was "the most dishonest individual I ever met in my life." Assessing his own role during Watergate, Goldwater recalled that, "my concern was for the nation . . . not the President. I knew that unless public confidence could be restored. . . our almost 200 years of effort to create the mechanisms to recognize and preserve the freedom of the individual would be jeopardized."⁴⁸

In retrospect, it appears that the presidency of Richard Nixon was one of the worst things that could have occurred for conservatives of the Goldwater persuasion. According to Jonathan Kolkey, Nixon's administration, far from reorienting

⁴⁷ Ibid., 279.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 280; Goldwater, With No Apologies, 263.

government away from the New Deal/New Frontier/Great Society liberalism of the previous thirty years, closely resembled the moderate, internationalist status-quo presidency of Dwight Eisenhower. Many of the social welfare programs enacted during the previous Democratic administrations remained largely intact, and inflation and the federal deficit grew.⁴⁹ Worse yet, James Reichley accused Nixon of manipulating conservative principles toward their basest interpretations in order to ensure his own political survival. Nixon's call for "law and order" in particular, often undermined human liberties to maintain order. Executive misuse of federal agencies to harass political enemies and lax enforcement of civil rights laws were just a few of many instances of such behavior. And although conservatism did not cause Watergate, Reichley maintained, the episode "represented the failure of conservatism, because Nixon. . .largely drew on conservative precepts. . .to rationalize [his] tactics."⁵⁰

Nixon biographer Stephen Ambrose commented upon the irony of the Nixon administration's failure in regard to conservative fortunes. His presidency did little to stem the liberalism that had flowered since the New Deal era. While Watergate "discredited Nixon," it also dealt a blow to the G.O.P. "middle ground" he had occupied between Rockefeller and Goldwater. Conservatives like Barry Goldwater and William F.

⁴⁹ Kolkey, New Right.

⁵⁰ Reichley, Age of Change, 260-1.

Buckley felt free to criticize his policies, and the Republican party underwent a shift to the right that culminated in the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980.⁵¹ None of this, however, was immediately apparent in 1974.

Many critics questioned Goldwater's public role during the Watergate crisis. Commonweal writer Peter Steinfelds observed that while Goldwater urged Nixon to be candid, he still--until the last possible moment--publicly proclaimed the President's innocence, just as he had done for Senator Joseph McCarthy twenty years before. Jonathan Kolkey thought this demonstrated a supreme lack of political judgement on Goldwater's part. This display of "monumental political stupidity" was the most glaring example of how Goldwater and his followers "succeeded in disgracing their own movement."⁵²

⁵¹ Ambrose, Nixon, 596.

⁵² Kolkey, New Right, 297, 298, 301.

CONCLUSION

Barry Goldwater was not an insignificant man in American political history. Theodore White has suggested that losing candidates often bring as much relevance to political dialogue as the winners, citing Adlai Stevenson as an example. To compare Goldwater with Stevenson, however, or to more obscure men like John W. Davis, is not accurate. White speculated that Goldwater's closest historical counterpart was William Jennings Bryan, who spoke with equal vigor about equally preposterous policies. Yet Goldwater, like Bryan, was able to inject a concern about what White termed "the condition and quality of American morality and life" into political debate. It was a philosophy that men with greater skill would later explain and carry out more effectively.¹ Goldwater's ideology can be seen in one of his disciples, Ronald Reagan. In 1981 then President Reagan paid the Arizona Senator the ultimate compliment by asserting that if Barry Goldwater had not "walked that lonely road, some of us wouldn't be here tonight."²

Goldwater undermined conservatism, nonetheless, because

¹ White, Making of the President, 346.

² Reinhard, Republican Right, 235.

he misunderstood the principles that guide that particular school of thought. When Peter Viereck described conservatism as protecting "humanist reverence for the dignity of the individual soul," he envisioned a principle that Goldwater was unable to grasp in anything other than antiquated notions about free-enterprise, individual self-reliance, and strict constructionism.³ Indeed, Viereck himself lamented Goldwater's preoccupation with free-market capitalism as a cure-all for the complex issues facing twentieth century life, and boldly disagreed with the notion that "historic Anglo-American conservatism, with its Disraeli-Churchill-Hughes-Roosevelt tradition of humane social reform, could ever be equated with the robber-baron kind of laissez-faire capitalism" that Goldwater and his followers seemed to embrace.⁴ A Burkean conservative would accept New Deal reforms as rooted institutions. Arthur Schlesinger shared Viereck's distrust of "Goldwater" conservatism. Early conservatives like Washington, Adams, and Hamilton possessed an interest in the national welfare that transcended mere "class interest." These were men of high intellectual caliber with an appreciation for history and a "realistic picture of social conflict." As such, they laid out the foundation of a strong national government that even agrarian liberals like

³ Viereck, Conservatism, 33.

⁴ Ibid., 140.

Jefferson came to appreciate in time.⁵

Goldwater's alliance with the Republican right draws suspicion when one examines his support of various G.O.P. party candidates over the course of his career. He supported Dwight Eisenhower over Robert Taft in 1952, Richard Nixon over Ronald Reagan in 1968, and Gerald Ford over Reagan in 1976. In each case he forsook the candidate with greater allegiance to "conservative" ideals and supported the man who presumably stood a greater chance of winning. This caused Jonathan Kolkey to remark that conservatives "hardly needed deadly enemies with good friends like Barry Goldwater."⁶ What this trend reinforces, however, was the Senator's unyielding allegiance to the Republican party. However forcefully he deplored its lack of alternatives to Democratic liberalism, he worked within the party to press for the changes he desired. He was a politician first, a philosopher second. He knew that the Republican party could only be effective if it won elections, and threw his support to the candidates that stood the greatest chance of doing so. Thus emerged his uneasy alliance with Richard Nixon.

Goldwater's re-emergence during the Nixon administration proved equally enigmatic. Goldwater's comeback from oblivion to reclaim his Senate seat was a testament to his continued popularity in Arizona. Public disenchantment with the

⁵ Schlesinger, The Vital Center, 16.

⁶ Kolkey, New Right, 206.

apparent lack of progress of either Great Society programs or civil rights, coupled with division over the Vietnam War, helped restore Goldwater's reputation. The man who was perceived as a dangerous radical in relatively peaceful times was now taken to be a man of honesty and stability in a period of social and political upheaval. Equally remarkable was the fact that the Senator was able to remain a powerful voice in both Congress and the G.O.P.

But his claim to fame as an outspoken critic of Richard Nixon himself is somewhat undeserved. Goldwater was apprehensive about much of the President's agenda, particularly in regard to his rapprochement with China and his policy of detente with the U.S.S.R. He did not, however, use his influence as a spokesman for party conservatives to change any substantive part of Nixon's administration. To be sure, Goldwater did attack Nixon's handling of the Watergate crisis, but only on tactical, not moral grounds. He continually believed the President's innocence until practically the eve of Nixon's resignation. Moreover, he quarreled with members of Congress and the media who insisted on pursuing the Watergate issue.

After Nixon's resignation, Goldwater continued in the Senate. He had mixed feelings about President Gerald Ford's pardon of Nixon. At the time he came out publicly in favor of the action, stating that it would help the country's healing process, but in his memoirs he claimed that the pardon was wrong, insisting that Nixon did not deserve to go free when

many under his command were sent to prison. Goldwater fought the nomination of Nelson Rockefeller for Vice-President in 1974. When Rockefeller was confirmed anyway, Goldwater concentrated on keeping him off the ticket in 1976, an effort that proved successful even though Ford lost the presidency that year to Democrat Jimmy Carter. When Ronald Reagan was elected President in 1980 and Republicans reclaimed control of the Senate, Goldwater was named Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee (a career-long ambition), where he served until his retirement in 1986.

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