

Barry Goldwater and the 1964 Elections

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June 15, 2009

The 1964 election was a watershed for the Republican Party. Barring Lyndon Johnson's threats to resign from the campaign, there was little chance of a Republican victory. The real battle in 1964 was within the Republican Party where right and left wing ideologies battled for control. The Conservative movement within the Republican Party had regained traction under the leadership of Barry Goldwater. Time magazine proclaimed Barry Goldwater the "hottest political figure this side of Jack Kennedy." (Goldwater 1979, 162) Conservatives had every reason to believe that Goldwater would gain the Republican nomination and have a fair showing in the national elections. Goldwater did gain the Republican nomination but he was resoundingly defeated in the 1964 elections where he won only 52 of the 486 electoral college votes. Johnson won by a 61% margin and a 15 million vote plurality, "the largest in American history." (Donaldson 2003, 295) Why had a man who had proven himself to be an effective campaigner and spokesman for conservatism been defeated so overwhelmingly in the national elections, even losing popularity in his home state of Arizona?

There are many variables that contribute to the outcome of an election: the candidates platform, the effectiveness of their organization, and the political and social climate of the day. But when all things are considered, Goldwater, as George Reedy put it, "scared the devil out of people." (Reedy 1983, 130) Goldwater was responsible for much of this fear but the media also contributed to the perception of Goldwater as a war monger. This was used by Goldwater's

opponents to good advantage. But ultimately, America's fear of Goldwater was an indicator of how far it had moved from conservative principles; principles that in 1964 seemed both new and frightening.

Since the 1920's the Republicans had been transformed into a 'me too' party that differed very little from the Democrats. The Republicans most powerful and respected Senator, Robert Taft, had tried three times to gain the Republican nomination but each time was pushed aside by a 'moderate' Republican candidate backed by powerful money interests in New York. Wendell Willkie and Thomas Dewey had each gained the Republican nomination and lost in the federal elections. Many began to question the undemocratic method in which Republican candidates were chosen and promoted. When Eisenhower was approached with the possibility of running on the Republican ticket, it was thought that the Republicans finally had a chance of breaking the twenty year long reign of the Democrats. The battle for the Republican nomination between Taft and Eisenhower was close and bitter. Robert Taft was strongly isolationist whereas Eisenhower promised, "If elected I shall go to Korea." (Chafe 2007, 132) Taft opposed the Lend-Lease program during WW2 and the increased appropriations for the Marshall Plan. Phyllis Schlafly, in her book *'A Choice Not an Echo'*, contended that it was because of Taft's isolationist policies that the New York 'kingmakers' within the Republican Party opposed his nomination. She argued that big business interests had consistently chosen candidates with foreign aid policies that benefited their financial and industrial empire overseas. (Schlafly 1964, 50) True or not, Schlafly's message resonated with many Americans; her little book sold over 1,000,000 copies in the run-up to the 1964 elections. With the victory of Eisenhower in 1952, it appeared as though 'the kingmakers' had gotten their way once again.

With the death of Robert Taft in 1953 some thought that conservative Republicanism had died with him. But it was during the wilderness years of the Eisenhower administration that a younger group of Republicans began to coalesce and inject youth and vigour into the Conservative movement. In 1954 William F. Buckley founded the conservative periodical, *National Review*, which became the influential voice of American conservatism. Buckley, with his aristocratic mannerism's and wealthy New England heritage, became one of Goldwater's most important supporter's. Another important conservative force born around this time and closely connected with Buckley was the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF). During a week at Buckley's estate, YAF outlined their statement of beliefs in what became known as the Sharon Statement. It offered a striking contrast to the Port Huron Statement released by 'Students for A Democratic Society'. The Conservatives had an effective media outlet and an active youth movement and in Barry Goldwater, the rising Senator from Arizona, they had a politician who could carry their message to Americans and hopefully into the White House. It was not to be.

Goldwater belonged to a wealthy merchant family. His grandfather was a European Jew who had come to the western United States with the plan of setting up a general store catering to gold seekers. Those plans failed but eventually the Goldwater's built a commercial dynasty in Arizona that included a high end fashion store in Phoenix. Goldwater later attributed his opposition to deficit spending to his years at the store, struggling to keep it afloat during the hard years of the Great Depression. During his first campaign for Senator, he was accused of being nothing more than a "ribbon clerk" to which Goldwater responded that he was, "a damned good ribbon clerk and proud of it." (Goldwater, 25) As a political neophyte in 1952, Goldwater had campaigned against a two term incumbent and won a major upset in a state where "the Democratic Party outnumbered the Republicans three to one." (Shadegg 1965, 3) By 1958,

80,000 registered Democrats crossed party lines to re-elect Goldwater. Stephen Shadegg, Goldwater's campaign manager and speech writer during his run for Senate, attributed part of the reason for Goldwater's success to his ability to "tame hostile crowds with his reasonable, friendly response to antagonistic questions", his "charisma which enables a speaker to arouse a crowd to wild enthusiasm" and "his ability to unite warring factions." (Shadegg 1965, in loc.)

In 1960 Goldwater collaborated with Stephen Shadegg on a syndicated column for the *Times* with all the proceeds going to charities that included a theological student, stained glass window for a church, the Prescott Community Hospital and Goldwater's old school, Staunton Military Academy. (Shadegg 1965, 26) Their column, '*How Do You Stand Sir*' was a tremendous success. Within a year it was appearing in 140 daily newspapers. Goldwater was asked if he would write a book that would provide a substantive description of conservative ideology. Goldwater agreed and recruited the help of Brent Bozwell, brother-in-law of the editor of the *National Review* to help write *Conscience of a Conservative*. The first printing was 10,000 copies. By 1964 it had sold 3.5 million copies. Lee Edwards has called it, "the most widely read political book of the twentieth century" (Donaldson 2003, 22)

To Conservatives, Barry Goldwater was a prophet in the wilderness calling 'the people' back to first principles. In his book, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, Goldwater cites the Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, who visited the United States in the 1830's and wrote, "[America] tended to put more emphasis on its democracy than on its republicanism... America would produce, not tyrants but "guardians" and would "console themselves for being in tutelage by the reflection that they have chosen their own guardians.'" (Goldwater 1979, 22) Goldwater was deeply suspicious of power concentrated in the hands of a few men and argued that America was removing the checks on power created by the founding fathers to keep political power from

eroding away the freedom enshrined in the Constitution. To many Conservatives, America had grown rotten at its core. This was perhaps most graphically expressed by Ayn Rand, a philosopher, novelist and supporter of Goldwater's candidacy who likened the United States to a mighty oak, so strong that "if a giant were to seize it by the top, he would not be able to uproot it, but would swing the hill and the whole of the earth with it, like a ball on the end of a string..." But the appearance of the mighty oak proved to be an illusion as Ayn Rand so vividly describes it, "One night, lightning struck the oak tree. Eddie saw it the next morning. It lay broke in half, and he looked into its trunk as into the mouth of a black tunnel. The trunk was only an empty shell; its heart had rotted away long ago; there was nothing inside-just a thin gray dust that was being dispersed by the whim of the faintest wind, The living power had gone, and the shape it left had not been able to stand without it." (Rand 1957, 5)

Barry Goldwater was not the only voice of conservatism. The fear of intrusion by an autocratic federal government was shared by many Americans. Some of this fear had its roots in racism while for others it was rooted in a firm conviction that a big government was inimical to freedom. George Wallace, the governor of Alabama, proved adept at tapping into this fear. Although he had little chance of winning, Wallace chose to run for Congress in three states with the goal of proving that his views were not limited to the Deep South. In Wisconsin, Wallace confounded Democrats by winning a far larger number of votes than anyone could have predicted. The press predicted that Wallace would gain maybe 5% of the vote. Instead, Wallace won 25% of the vote. Wallace's strongest supporters were among upper middle-income whites. In one of Milwaukee's wealthiest suburbs, he took 66% of the vote. Wallace tried to distance himself from racist accusations by advocating state rights. He said, "I am not racist, I am a segregationist... If Wisconsin believes in integration, that is Wisconsin's business, not mine..."

(Donaldson 2003, 130) Wallace's victories were not limited to Wisconsin. He won almost as many votes in Indiana and would have won the primary in Maryland if it were not for the bloc black vote. Why was Wallace so popular? Wallace claimed, "It was a vote against those wild-eyed, far-out pinko liberals who, under the false guise of civil right, are trying to control all your property and dictate every detail of our lives." (Donaldson 2003, 132) It is worth noting that during Wallace's campaign, the Civil Rights Act was being debated in Congress. According to Donaldson, Wallace had "demonstrated that there is a counter-revolutionary minority in the North... could that minority be converted into a majority by a man free of Wallace's red-neck-rousing reputation?" (Donaldson 2003, 157) A man such as Barry Goldwater?

In 1960 Goldwater sought to dismiss attempts to nominate him at the 1960 Republican Convention. In Goldwater's speech at the convention he declined the nomination attempt by South Carolina and sought to unify the party behind Vice President Nixon. The speech drew thunderous applause and many felt that with it, he officially launched his campaign for President in 1964. But Goldwater had many doubts. Shadegg recounts that whenever anyone spoke to him of the possibility of becoming President, he "became irritable and short tempered." (Shadegg 1965, 46) In his memoirs, Goldwater recounted the frustrations Eisenhower felt as president. He was not sure that he had the ability to deal with the intense pressure placed on the President of the United States. Moreover, his wife Peggy, did not like Washington. But Goldwater's indecision was akin to a man on a surfboard debating whether he will ride the wave even as it begins to curl behind him. Goldwater had done more than any man to promote the cause of conservatism and, in 1964, he was the Republicans best chance at finally nominating a true conservative.

Goldwater had anticipated a faceoff with John F. Kennedy, a man with whom he had many disagreements but respected. In his memoirs he claimed that Kennedy and he had discussed campaigning against each other. “Kennedy thought that if we could engage in a serious dialogue - direct the voter’s attention to the nations’ major problems-and then offer alternative solutions, we would be making a constructive contribution to the public’s understanding of the complexities of government.” (Goldwater 1979, in loc.) It has been said that when JFK was shot by an assassin, it killed any chance for Goldwater to win the presidency. Certainly that was how Goldwater felt. In June of 1964 the polls showed Johnson polling with 75% in favour of a Johnson/Humphreys ticket. In an interview with *Der Spiegel*, Goldwater downplayed the chances of him becoming president, even as he was preparing to campaign. Goldwater dreaded a campaign against Johnson. Unlike JFK, Goldwater did not believe that Johnson “was capable of opposing without hate.” (Goldwater 1979, 160) Ultimately, Goldwater ran because he believed that if he didn’t, the Republican Party would remain under the control of eastern Liberals. For Republicans of all stripes, the 1964 elections were about who would gain control of the party more than about winning the presidency.

Centrist or left wing Republicans such as William Scranton, Henry Cabot Lodge, George Romney and Richard Nixon hoped for an endorsement from Eisenhower that would give them the much needed springboard with which to oppose Goldwater. They never got it. The battle for the Republican nomination would revolve around Goldwater and Rockefeller; a battle that would ultimately have a polarizing effect on the party. Rockefeller represented the big business interests of the north east. His party platform was barely distinguishable from that of Democrats. Although Goldwater and Rockefeller would become bitter opponents as the campaign wore on, they made it a point to meet once a month and there was mutual respect between them.

Goldwater later wrote that “Rockefeller was a great American would have made a good president.” (Goldwater 1979, 97) Their frequent meetings encouraged rumours that they had formed an alliance. However, it soon became clear that the philosophical differences between the two men precluded anything of the sort. Moreover, Rockefeller's divorce from his wife and subsequent remarriage to a much younger and beautiful woman badly damaged his candidacy.

Goldwater started his primary campaign in New Hampshire with a comfortable lead over Rockefeller. But Goldwater's campaign in New Hampshire was badly mishandled and Goldwater was not in his finest form, having just gone through a painful surgery on his foot. Criticism that Goldwater was grumpy and irritable would be repeated throughout the campaign. Health problems and poor organization aside, the biggest problem for Goldwater was that he tended to say what he believed without thinking about how it would fly in the press. By the end of the New Hampshire campaign, America believed Goldwater was, “a fire breathing monster who would repeal social Security and plunge the world into nuclear war.” (Donaldson 2003, 80) As long as Goldwater spoke in generalities, he “appealed to the conservative mind” but when he spoke in specifics, he “disturbed voters”. (Donaldson 2003, 80) Rockefeller used Goldwater's off the cuff remarks to label him an extremist. But Rockefeller could never fully pin Goldwater with the extremism label. Nor could Rockefeller count on the kind of grass root support that Goldwater could had. In Oregon, Rockefeller had resorted to paying as much as \$3.00 per vote, but in California, the Rockefeller campaign sought to dispel the perception of Rockefeller as powerful money magnate by keeping a low profile and not spending too much on TV and radio ads. The Goldwater's campaign felt no such pressure and launched a massive advertising campaign. The result was that Goldwater carried California by a razor thin margin of 1.3 million to 1.1 million. There was little doubt now that Rockefeller had lost any chance at the Republican

nomination. Goldwater was headed to the Republican convention with more electoral votes than he needed.

The convention in San Francisco was a massive affair. For four days it received continual coverage on all the major networks. Although Goldwater's victory seemed assured, the media speculated that centrist Republicans would make a last minute effort to regain control of the party machinery, possibly through an endorsement by Eisenhower. Eisenhower, however, clearly had no intentions of playing king maker. The relationship between Goldwater and Eisenhower was complicated. Goldwater had harshly criticized Eisenhower in the Senate over budget deficits and had voted against Eisenhower's Civil Rights Bill but there seems to have been a degree of mutual respect between the two men. At least Eisenhower did not destroy Goldwater's chance at the nomination when he had the opportunity and campaigned for Goldwater afterwards.

The convention resulted in serious divisions within the Republican Party. The disdain for Rockefeller was palpable. He was booed so constantly and loudly that he could barely finish his speech at the convention. It didn't help that in his speech, he labelled Goldwater sympathisers as Klu Klux Klan extremists. With a smirk on his face he said, "These extremist feed on fear, hate and terror. They encourage disunity. [interrupted by boo's] These are people that have nothing in common with Americanism. The Republican party must repudiate these people." (San Francisco) The galleries erupted in howls of displeasure and it was carried live on TV across the nation. Clif White, organizer of the Draft Goldwater movement, wrote later that, "hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions" of votes were lost that night. (Donaldson 2003, 177) One reporter recalls his impressions as he watched the proceedings, "The liberal wing of the GOP was dying before our eyes." (San Francisco)

On the last day of the convention, South Carolina, the state that had sought to nominate Goldwater in 1960, cast the deciding votes in favour of Goldwater with a simple pronouncement, “South Carolina, proud that we can do this for America.” (San Francisco) As all of America watched, Goldwater rose to make his acceptance speech - a speech that would be remembered for his paraphrase of Cicero, “I would remind you extremism in the defence of liberty is no vice. Let me also remind you that the moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.” (San Francisco) One observer, commenting on the reaction to those lines, said, “It was extremely exciting when he said it... but most of us in our hearts knew that this was not a very politic thing to say” (San Francisco) A newsman, upon hearing these lines, was heard commenting, “Good god, Goldwater is going to run as Goldwater!” (San Francisco) It was anything but a pacifying speech. Although the crowd roared in support of Goldwater, the Convention revealed deep splits in the Republican Party. William Scranton, Governor of Pennsylvania, a man some speculated would be the ideal running mate for Goldwater, sent a letter to Goldwater denouncing him as a destroyer of the Republican Party. He wrote, “Goldwaterism has come to stand for nuclear irresponsibility... Goldwaterism has come to stand for a whole crazy-quilt collection of absurd and dangerous positions that would be soundly repudiated by the American people in November.” (Donaldson 2003, 171) Scranton denied later that he had written the letter or even seen it although he did not disagree with its contents. Goldwater suggests that it was written to quell any chance of Scranton becoming his running mate, an option Goldwater wasn't ruling out. All of this played into Johnson's hands. Lyndon Johnson simply picked up the rhetoric already employed by Scranton, Romney and Rockefeller. Lyndon Johnson was a tremendously effective campaigner. His effect on crowds illustrated by the way he campaigned in Denver where he rode through the city with a bull horn shouting, “Come on down to the speakin'. We're

gonna have a hot time in the old town tonight.” (Kessel 1968, 244) Johnson, who was thought to have little support in New England, noticed large crowds at the edge of the airport and spent the rest of the day shaking hands or “pressing flesh” as he called it, “until well after midnight.” (Kessel 1968, 243) On these campaigns Johnson limited his speeches to principles and left out the details.

Goldwater had also proven himself to be an effective campaigner. Stephen Shadegg placed Goldwater second only to JFK in his ability to move crowds. But those closest to Goldwater noticed that he had become stern and withdrawn throughout the campaign. Perhaps it was the pressure, or the dirty politics, but Goldwater was not the warm, friendly man that had won so many to his cause as the junior Senator from Arizona. Although Goldwater had become more careful in his comments; he lacked media sensitivity. Goldwater had chosen Dennis Kitchel as his campaign chairman and Richard Kleindienst as field director. Both were Arizona men. Stephen Shadegg criticized these appointments, arguing effectively that they lacked the knowledge or contacts to manage a national campaign and that Clif White, the organizer of the very effective Draft Goldwater movement, would have been a better choice. Goldwater may have been concerned that if he accepted Clif White as his manager, he would appear as though he had been drafted by Clif White’s organization, reducing his ability to conduct the campaign on his own terms. Whether this is true or not, there is no doubt that Goldwater’s late decision to run for the Presidency combined with the inexperience of his staff made for a disastrous combination. Goldwater later admitted “my inner circle of advisers had very little experience in the politics of campaigning.” (Goldwater 1979, 164) Kleindienst had decided that the Goldwater campaign would not seek to gain votes by making regional promises that effectively added up to ‘buying votes’. They would take the ‘honest politician’ approach. What this meant

was that Goldwater, when campaigning in Tennessee made no mention of the Tennessee Valley Authority; in Memphis he made no mention of the needs of cotton growers; in Oregon he made no reference to the dispute between the lumber industry and port policies; in St. Petersburg he made no mention of Social Security; in Winston-Salem “Goldwater attacked Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara... he did not mention cotton or peanuts or tobacco.” (Shadegg 1965, 218) These oversights may have been based on certain principles but they were politically suicidal. The question deserves to be asked, did Goldwater want to win? One speech made towards the end of the campaign is worth quoting for it reveals a politician in revolt against the people,

“You have probably been reading and hearing about some of the unorthodox things I have been doing. I have gone to the heart of Appalachia and there I have deliberately attacked this administration’s phony war on poverty. I have gone into the heart of Florida’s retirement country and there I have deliberately warned against the outright hoax of this administration’s Medicare scheme. I have gone into the heart of our farm areas there I have deliberately called for the gradual transition from a controlled to a free agriculture. I have gone into an area of rapid urban growth there I have deliberately levelled against the Supreme Court the charge that they have no business attempting to redraw the map of our state legislative districts.” (Shadegg 1965, 242)

Goldwater’s frankness may have been an asset on Senate committees but his inability to make compromises in order to build up the center of his coalition would cost him votes. Based on the above speech, it appears that Goldwater was aware of this fact. His campaign was an act of defiance, a sacrifice made on the altar of conservatism.

The national campaign was no gentleman’s match but there were certain parameters that Goldwater and Johnson agreed on in a secret meeting. At Goldwater’s insistence, both men agreed not to politicize the war in Vietnam or civil rights lest it “polarize the country.”

(Goldwater 1979, 193) Although civil rights was a touch issue for both men, it was really a gift

to Johnson. Race riots across the country had resulted in a backlash against the Civil Rights Act. Polls conducted after the riots showed that Goldwater gained in popularity during these riots. In response, Johnson sought assurances from civil rights leaders that they would not hold marches during the campaign. But Johnson's greatest civil rights problems were not caused by the riots but by the two delegations from Mississippi that showed up at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City; one white and the other black members belonging to the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. The leaders of the MFDP argued that they had been barred from voting for the members of the white Mississippi delegation whereas their delegates had been elected in open, legal elections. Moreover, the white Mississippi delegates had not committed their nomination to Lyndon Johnson but the black Mississippi delegates were prepared to nominate Johnson. At stake were the principles and ideology of the civil rights movement and the Southern vote. Johnson had hoped to carry the South and gain the black vote at the same time. The challenge by the MFDP was significant enough that he threatened his resignation because "the South is against me and the north is against me and the Negroes are against me." (Donaldson 2003, 222) This was not the first time Johnson threatened to resign but this time his staff took him seriously. Lyndon Johnson decided not to withdraw his candidacy, partly due to a letter written to him by his wife that reminded him what a fix he would leave the party if he dropped out of the campaign. A compromise was desperately sought and eventually it was agreed that two of the MFDP delegates would be allowed to vote as delegates-at-large and Johnson promised that no segregated delegations would be allowed in 1968. Johnson had also implied that Hubert Humphreys would be his Vice President if a compromise could be made with MFDP. Rauh, an advocate for the MFDP, recalled that "you had the whole Democratic political machine, the President, the whole White House, the whole labour movement, all trying

to stop a few little Mississippi Negroes and me from making a little stink at the Democratic Convention.” (Donaldson 2003, 221) The MFDP delegation was divided on whether to accept a compromise. The resulting breach in the civil rights movement would have long lasting implications. It also marked a shift in the south from support for the Democrats to the Republicans. The Democrats in turn, picked up the northern black vote.

Civil rights did not feature prominently in the campaign. As agreed, Goldwater did not court the southern vote through an appeal to racial tensions. He made only two speeches that included anything about civil rights. In the first, he decried compulsory segregation and compulsory integration as equally misguided. Laws could only go so far in solving what was, at its heart, a moral problem. He said the role of the central government was “neither to establish a segregated society nor to establish an integrated society. It is to preserve a free society.” (Kessel 1968, 210) Although Goldwater believed that some laws were needed, he had voted against the Civil Rights Bill of 1964 because he believed it contained provisions “whose execution would require the creation of a police state.” (Goldwater 1979, 180) When Goldwater cast the vote, he said, “If my vote is misconstrued, let it be and let me suffer the consequences.” (Goldwater 1979, 180) Most of the press branded him as a segregationist.

Civil Rights was a contentious issue but it was Goldwater’s stance on nuclear issues that proved to be the greater liability. Goldwater had been repeatedly attacked on this issue by Scranton and Rockefeller in the primaries and Johnson in the federal campaign. The charge of nuclear irresponsibility would dog Goldwater for the entire campaign. Goldwater recounts in his memoirs the horrors of watching for the first time, ads that depicted him as a madman threatening nuclear war. In one ad, the narrator discusses the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and what would happen to the treaty if Goldwater became President.

“This is why we signed a treaty [shows a pregnant women walking hand in hand with her child through a field]. It is called a nuclear test ban treaty. Radioactive fallout from nuclear testing is a biological risk. That is why the US during the Kennedy/Johnson administration joined with other nations in holding poisonous atomic tests in the atmosphere. President Johnson will not break this treaty for as long as all nations honour it. On November 3 vote for President Johnson. The stakes are too high for you to stay at home. (Pregnant Lady, 1964)

Goldwater’s refusal to back down on his proposal to repeal of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was costly and would force Goldwater to remain on the defensive. Some of Goldwater’s quips were not helpful although the headlines they generated were patently false. For example, when questioned about tactics for winning in Vietnam, Goldwater discussed in theoretical terms some of the ideas that were being discussed by military authorities. In that context, he mentioned that low yield nuclear weapons might be used to remove tree cover over the main supply route of the Vietcong. Editorials the next day indicated that Goldwater advocated the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam. Goldwater was a blatant misconstrual of Goldwater’s words although it is difficult to comprehend why Goldwater even spoke of such a policy in theoretical terms. Goldwater also faced headwinds with many of his domestic policies. In New Hampshire, Goldwater argued that Social Security was “actuarially unsound... a pseudo-insurance program totally unfunded” and that the system needed to be repaired or phased out. (Goldwater 1979, in loc.) The headlines read, “*GOLDWATER SETS GOALS; END SOCIAL SECURITY*” Goldwater’s ill conceived comments and the associated charges by the media prevented him from conveying what was at the core of his political beliefs. John Knight of the Detroit Free Press, was not a supporter of Goldwater but argued that the press was antagonistic. “I can no longer stand silently by and watch the shabby treatment Goldwater is getting from most of the news media... the Goldwater movement represents a mass protest by conservatively-minded people against foreign aid, excessive welfare, high taxes, foreign policy, and the concentration of power in the federal government.”

(Goldwater 1979, 181) These conservative issues deserved a hearing but they were dismissed instead as the beliefs of an extremist who, as the editors of *Fact* periodical warned, was psychologically unfit to be President.

The year 1964 marked a shift in support by the media for Democratic candidates. Traditionally Republican media magnates dominated the nation's media. For example, in 1936, Republican Alf Landon had the support of most newspapers despite his overwhelming unpopularity with the most Americans. By 1964 this had completely reversed. Johnson received 455 endorsements from newspapers, with a combined readership of 27.6 million while Goldwater was endorsed by 368 newspapers with a readership of only 9.7 million. (Donaldson 2003, 261) The *Times*, which had published Goldwater's column since 1960, threw its backing behind Rockefeller in 1964. Goldwater was deeply hurt by this. This trend in the media towards support for Democratic candidates would not be reversed in subsequent elections.

Goldwater counterattacked with ads of his own and used the support of Hollywood stars such Ronald Regan and John Wayne. In one such add, various scenes of social decay are interspersed with appearances by John Wayne and excerpts from Goldwater's campaign speeches.

Narrator: Thou fool, this night they do require thy soul of thee. This night is here, now. Two Americas and you, you alone standing between them. Which do you really want? Which?

John Wayne: You have the strongest hand in the world. That's right, your hand. The hand that marks the ballot, the hand the pulls the voting lever. Use it will you? Use it.

Goldwater: Violence in the streets; corruption in our highest office; aimlessness among our youth; anxiety among our elders and there is a virtual despair among the many.
[applause]

Goldwater: I look forward to the tomorrow in which high purpose and high morals will be restored to our high offices

Goldwater: I look forward to a republic under God in which the American dream is still attainable and still sought. I look forward to shaping that tomorrow with you, with your families and with all the people of this our Republic.

John Wayne: It's in your hands America, it's in your hands. Which America? (Choice, 1964)

The ad played off of the rapid social changes that were occurring in American society in the 1960's. It should be noted however, that Goldwater never made social conservatism the crux of his message. The *Conscience of a Conservative* does not make any mention of social policies but focuses rather on the destructive influence of the big government on the human spirit. Goldwater wished to offer Americans an alternative to the New Deal liberalism. During the primaries Goldwater never made an issue of Rockefeller's divorce and remarriage to Happy or the arrival of a child soon after. Neither did Goldwater attack Johnson directly over corruption charges although he did attack one of Johnson's close colleagues, Bobby Baker. Baker had been secretary to the majority who had risen to prominence, mostly due to the influence of Lyndon Johnson who treated him like a second son. It was subsequently discovered that Bobby Baker used his political influence to gain contracts and hand out favours. Although Johnson was not directly implicated in these deals, there was a certain amount of guilt by association. Even more damaging for Johnson was the arrest of Walter Jenkins, Lyndon Johnson's long time advisor, for improper conduct involving a homosexual liaison in the men's toilet of a rundown YMCA. Despite whisperings around Washington, the Johnson administration successfully suppressed the news for seven days. Goldwater, however, refused to use the event to attack Johnson, much to Goldwater's campaign manager despair. Whatever damage the Jenkins affair caused was diminished by two events that occurred in the final days of the campaign. The first was displacement of Khrushchev by Kosygin and Brezhnev and the second was the detonation of China's first nuclear bomb.

Both of these events refocused people's attention on what turned out to be the main issue in the campaign of 1964. As Johnson put it, whose hand do you want closer to the red button?

Johnson was following the advice of his press secretary, George Reedy, as recorded in a July 22 telephone conversation,

People think he's [Goldwater] pretty reckless. And I think the one thing that we ought to get out now is some of the things that he has said about the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, but not say it in the way that it has been said. I think we gotta get this thing down to some gut things: Mothers that are worried about having radioactive poison in their kids' milk. Men that are worried about becoming sterile. Uh, give them some thoughts about maybe kids being born with two heads and things like that. (G. Reedy Telephone Conversation with Johnson, July 22, 1964)

The 1964 election was not a rejection of Conservative values nor was it a sweeping endorsement of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. It was about the fear of a nuclear holocaust. The primary reason for Goldwater's failure in the 1964 election was due to his lack of tact in discussing his ideas, especially as they related to so sensitive a topic as nuclear weapons, and the ability of his opponents to use the fear of a nuclear holocaust in order to avoid substantive debate. But a larger question remains unanswered. Had the American people moved so far in their ideology that in 1964 conservative principles seemed alien and frightening?

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