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## To defeat a maverick: Foreign policy, Barry Goldwater and the 1964 presidential election

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TO DEFEAT A MAVERICK:  
Foreign Policy, Barry Goldwater  
And The 1964 Presidential Election

by

Jeffrey J. Matthews

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

History

Department of History  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
May 1995

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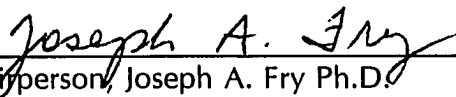
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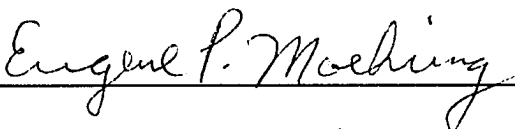
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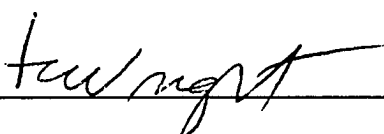
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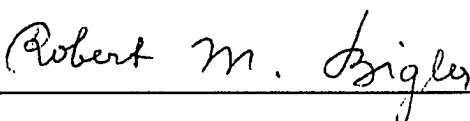
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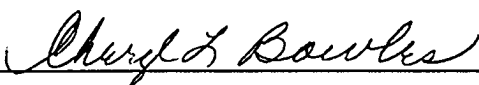
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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines Cold War influences on early post-World War II presidential elections, Barry M. Goldwater's rise to Republican presidential nominee, and the contribution of foreign policy issues to the Arizonan's defeat in the 1964 presidential election. World War II and the Cold War increased the importance of foreign policy considerations in presidential elections, and from 1948 through 1964, every major party nominee advocated the militant containment of communism. Goldwater was an ardent Cold Warrior, who had developed staunch convictions on domestic and foreign matters. As a senator, his unwavering conservatism cast him as a "maverick" among other Republicans; however, in 1964 the GOP right wing dominated state and local party machinery and the increasingly popular Arizonan captured the presidential nomination. The margin of Goldwater's overwhelming election defeat was due largely to the public's perception of him as an impulsive radical who would senselessly risk nuclear confrontation in the Cold War. This grossly unfavorable perception was propagated by the senator's numerous Republican and Democratic critics, although Goldwater, himself, bore significant responsibility for the image.



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the early 1960s the United States was approaching its zenith as the dominant world power. The nation's post-World War II economic boom provided Americans with unparalleled prosperity and enabled its government to operate a global military defense network. The economy of Western Europe had recovered rapidly from its wartime destruction with substantial U.S. aid, and the region's governing democratic principles had remained generally intact. Correspondingly, America's new rival power, the communist governed Soviet Union, lagged behind the West's sweeping economic modernization. By 1963 Russia had achieved remarkable military advancements, including a rapidly expanding atomic arsenal, but Moscow suffered from a major defeat in the "Cold War" against the West when it was forced to withdraw nuclear missiles from the Caribbean island of Cuba. Despite occasions of detente, such as the limited nuclear test ban accord, the two superpowers engaged in inflammatory geopolitics and an ominous weapons race.

Momentous world events, such as the Soviet Union's domination over Eastern Europe (1944-48), the rise of China's communist government (1949),

communist North Korea's invasion of South Korea (1950), Moscow's forceful suppression of Eastern European revolutionaries (1956), the Soviet Union's Sputnik satellite launch (1957), and Cuba's alliance with the Soviet Union (1961), caused the leaders of United States and Western Europe to fear the encroachment of communism. Consequently, fervid anti-communist philosophy and policy came to govern American society and led to a "Red Scare" in the 1940s and 1950s. And, despite the passing of McCarthyism and even the death of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy in 1957, a generally bipartisan, militant anti-communist foreign policy continued to dominate Washington.

Influential leaders in the United States equated Joseph Stalin's postwar totalitarianism with the evils of Adolph Hitler's imperialism and consequently, there was minimal domestic opposition to emerging foreign policies designed to "contain" the spread of international communism. Containment policy was manifested in 1947 with the Truman Doctrine pledge that "It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures."<sup>1</sup> The United States assured Western Europe's security with the implementation of the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, while other non-communist nations such as Greece, Turkey, Israel, South Korea and Vietnam benefitted from foreign aid programs and regional collective security agreements.

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<sup>1</sup>John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy (New York, 1982), 22.

America's preoccupation with fighting the spread of communism significantly influenced domestic politics. Only once did a well known presidential candidate, Henry Wallace, openly advocate cooperation with the Soviet Union, and he failed to win a single electoral vote in the 1948 election. Other presidential candidates, including Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy, all subscribed to historical lessons derived from the 1930s including the importance of military preparedness and the avoidance of diplomatic appeasement. Most leaders, from what historian Thomas G. Paterson has called the "cold war generation," believed that the massive troop demobilization, weapons disarmament, and political isolationism of the industrialized nations after World War I directly encouraged German and Japanese aggression. Further, Nazi belligerence in the thirties exposed the pitfalls of "soft" diplomacy: that "aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war."<sup>2</sup>

After 1948 every major party U.S. presidential nominee systematically sought to emphasize his Cold War credentials and promised to execute a "more effective" anti-communist foreign policy. For eight years in the 1950s, Americans intrusted their foreign relations to a career military officer, General Dwight D. Eisenhower. The extremely close presidential election of 1960, between Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy, demonstrated the "ingrained

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas G. Paterson, "Bearing the Burden: A Critical Look At JFK's Foreign Policy," The Virginia Quarterly Review, 54 (Spring 1978): 199.

nature" of Cold War history as the candidates shared similar views on foreign affairs with both calling for "victory" over international communism.<sup>3</sup> But just four years later, the Democratic Party's overwhelming presidential triumph gave the appearance of national consensus on domestic and international platforms of a single candidate. Although the incumbent President, Lyndon Johnson, was likely to defeat any opponent in 1964, his landslide margin of victory, which resulted largely from his posturing on defense and foreign policy, was neither predictable nor inevitable. Still distraught by the November 1963 Kennedy assassination, the American people were unlikely to condone the election of a third different president within a mere twelve month period. However, the 1964 campaign possessed the potential for a meaningful debate of issues and ideology that had been noticeably absent in the Kennedy-Nixon contest. At the core of the candidates' differences were widely varying interpretations over the role of the federal government. Their positions on civil rights, fiscal policy, and federal spending programs, all posed legitimate differences from which voters could choose. The Republican challenger, Barry Goldwater, promised "A Choice Not An Echo." Ironically however, it was the candidates' *perceived* differences in foreign affairs - - an area in which the two candidates probably shared the most basic if unspoken commonality - - that ended up being one of the most decisive campaign issues.

Lyndon Johnson's crushing victory resulted from the public's negative

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<sup>3</sup>Paterson, "Bearing the Burden," 199.

perception of his opponent: an alleged reactionary, who opposed popular federal spending programs; a reputed racist, who opposed civil rights; and an ostensible foreign policy militant, who advocated nuclear wars. Goldwater, himself, bore significant responsibility for this irreparable image. His adherence to and outspoken support of conservative political ideology, his fervent anti-communism, his advocacy of limited wars and nuclear testing, and his impetuous and sometimes careless speaking manner, all contributed to this unfavorable portrait. But both the Democratic Party and Goldwater's Republican critics vehemently promoted this negative characterization by capitalizing on his verbal blunders and distorting and exaggerating his positions on numerous domestic and international issues.

Of the many factors that contributed to the "Goldwater image," the lingering impression of a foreign policy extremist proved the most damaging to his campaign. The country's escalating commitment to Southeast Asia, capped by Johnson's August 1964 retaliatory bombing of North Vietnam, served to heighten the importance of foreign affairs leadership during the election. Goldwater's bellicose Cold War rhetoric amplified voter apprehension regarding U.S. involvement in either limited or unrestricted warfare. Although continuing involvement in Southeast Asia allowed Goldwater to criticize Kennedy-Johnson policies, the Vietnam issue also enabled Johnson and others to perpetuate the expanding representation of Goldwater as a presidential candidate who would risk nuclear war to halt the spread of communism.

Analysis of 1964 presidential campaign could easily be reduced to a study of contrasts. Nowhere were the stark contrasts of the 1964 campaign more evident than in the comparison of the nominees themselves. Barry Goldwater was a popular conservative idealist with relatively limited political expertise, whereas Lyndon Johnson was a pragmatic and masterful career politician. In retrospect, it is clear that the Arizonan wanted to debate ideological principles and the Texan wanted to become president. Significant leads in early public opinion polls and general Democratic Party unity enabled Johnson to concentrate on presidential duties early in the year and run a low key incumbent campaign. His challenger, who planned an exhaustive assault style strategy, quickly found himself on the defensive in the Republican primaries, fending off attacks from GOP moderates and liberals. The serious wounds suffered by Goldwater during the first half of the year were never allowed to heal. The Democrats capitalized on the Republicans' bruising treatment of their own nominee and embarked upon a relentless attack on Goldwater. Unlike the presidential election of 1952, the last time the GOP faced an incumbent Democratic Party, Goldwater was never able to mount a decisive offensive against Lyndon Johnson. This paper seeks to review how the Cold War influenced early post-World War II presidential elections, Barry Goldwater's rise to Republican presidential nominee, and the contribution of foreign policy issues to the Arizonan's landslide defeat in the 1964 presidential election.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE COLD WAR CONTEXT, 1945-1963

By the early 1960s the United States's tenure as a world power approached what historian Thomas J. McCormick characterized as "Hegemony at High Tide."<sup>4</sup> With more than one million service personnel stationed abroad, the United States operated a vast network of military installations from Manila to Berlin. Although concerns had been raised over the margin of America's nuclear missile superiority, the country's military capabilities still greatly exceeded all other nations including the Soviet Union. Equally impressive was America's unparalleled economic growth. In the two decades that followed World War II, economic production exceeded the nation's aggregate output during its first 170 years of existence. From 1945 to 1963 annual domestic gross national product nearly tripled from \$211.9 to \$590.5 billion and the number of employed workers increased by 20 million. During this era of unprecedented military and economic power, the objective of U.S. foreign policy was to maintain America's prosperity and contain the influence of the Soviet Union.

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<sup>4</sup>Thomas J. McCormick, America's Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy In The Cold War (Baltimore, 1989), 125.

Remarkably, in 1946 America produced 50 percent of the world's goods and services, possessed a nuclear monopoly, and maintained a 100,000-plane air force and a 70,000-ship navy. But the instability of the postwar world joined by fears of another Great Depression pressured the U.S. government to construct a new international system that encompassed vibrant and stable markets. American efforts to remake the world based upon liberal national principles of multilateral trade and democracy resulting in a de facto war against international communism, a war that permeated the fabric of American society.

The "Cold War" originated from the many complex events of World War II, which had, according to historian Thomas G. Paterson, "unhinged the world of stable politics, inherited wisdom traditions, institutions, alliances, loyalties, commerce, and classes."<sup>5</sup> America's prewar inclination toward political isolationism had diminished significantly after Japan's successful attack upon Pearl Harbor and with the maturation of the nuclear, air and communication ages. With its industrial and agricultural capacity unscathed, the United States emerged as the world's only economic and military superpower, as the once powerful nations of Europe and Asia had fallen victim to the ravages of war. Although the Soviet Union survived the ordeal with a relatively powerful conventional army, even its power allowed only for regional hegemony,

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<sup>5</sup>Thomas G. Paterson, On Every Front: The Making And Unmaking Of The Cold War (New York, 1992), 15.

thereby leaving the U.S. the predominant architect of the postwar world.

America's future prosperity and security required the cooperation of other industrialized nations, and given its historic economic, cultural, and political ties to its major wartime allies, Europe's postwar recovery became a priority objective for policymakers. The combination of widespread human suffering and massive commercial and residential property damage in Europe resulted in political turmoil and spawned socialist and communist movements, particularly in France, Poland, Greece, Yugoslavia, and the Netherlands. By war's end, the Russian Army had already occupied the entire eastern half of the continent and Americans feared further western encroachment in addition to the possibility of indigenous communist victories.

After the war, an uneven and increasingly hostile bipolar world had begun to replace the prewar multipolar configuration of the 1930s. The United States and the Soviet Union, Paterson observed, "became ensnared in the instability of the new international system and increasingly clashed...[as] they built competing spheres of influence." Threatened by America's economic and military power and suspicious of a U.S. dominated Europe, Russia quickly severed its wartime alliances and began to independently enhance its own national security, including increased military and political control over Eastern European nations. American leaders concluded that Russia had "gone imperialistic." Their exaggerated anti-Russian rhetoric that stressed the dangers of "creeping communism" and gave rise to an anti-communist atmosphere

engulfed America for decades. President Harry S. Truman distinguished differences between "open" and "exclusive" spheres of influence and justified increased U.S. militancy: "Though the United States wants no territory or profit or selfish advantage out of this war, we are going to maintain the military bases necessary for the complete protection of our interests and of world peace."<sup>6</sup> Soviet leaders had reached similar imperialistic conclusions about American postwar militancy and expansion into Western Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Truman's immediate postwar foreign aid programs dovetailed with the evolution of America's formal anti-communist foreign policy. In February 1946, U.S. Foreign Service officer, George F. Kennan sent Washington an 8,000 word cable from Moscow, interpreting Russia's postwar anti-Western behavior. He wrote "we have here a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with [the] US there can be no permanent *modus vivendi*."<sup>7</sup> Kennan's "long telegram," noted historian John Lewis Gaddis, possessed "ideas of such force and persuasion" as to inspire an immediate change in American foreign policy.<sup>8</sup> The resulting policy of "patience and firmness" evolved into a policy of "containment," which sought to prevent any Soviet influence in the

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<sup>6</sup>Paterson, On Every Front, 43, 56, 58, 79.

<sup>7</sup>Thomas G. Paterson, J. Garry Clifford, and Kenneth J. Hagan, American Foreign Policy: A History / since 1900 (Lexington, Massachusetts, 1983), 444.

<sup>8</sup>John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy (New York, 1982), 19.

reshaping of the postwar world. George Kennan's July 1947 Foreign Affairs article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," outlined containment as a defense strategy designed to "confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world."<sup>9</sup> Containing the Soviet Union became "the central preoccupation of postwar national security policy."<sup>10</sup>

America's preoccupation with the communist threat resulted in activist policies reliant upon a conventional and nuclear arms build-up and massive economic and military foreign aid programs. From 1945 to 1947 the United States provided \$9 billion in foreign aid utilizing various indirect conduits such as the Export-Import Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations. Much of this aid went to less-developed countries. World War II had accelerated nationalist movements in Asia, Africa and the Middle East which resulted in political instability. As the old European empires began to disintegrate in places like Indonesia and Vietnam, the United States attempted to keep the emerging governments within the West's realm of influence. America's foreign aid policy toward two eastern Mediterranean nations created lasting and influential precedents.

Bankrupt by five years of war, Great Britain announced its inability to maintain support of the pro-Western governments of Greece and Turkey.

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<sup>9</sup>Paterson, On Every Front, 72.

<sup>10</sup>Gaddis, Strategies Of Containment, viii.

Greece had become embroiled in a fierce struggle against communist insurgents, and Turkey, which possessed a key geographic position between Russia and the Mediterranean, appeared in comparable jeopardy. Secretary of State Dean G. Acheson predicted that the "loss" of Turkey and Greece to communism would open the door for Soviet influence on three continents. In March 1947 President Truman appealed to the U.S. Congress to "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."<sup>11</sup> Republican Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan summarized the Truman-Acheson thesis: "the fall of Greece, followed by the fall of Turkey, would establish a chain reaction around the world which could very easily leave us isolated in a Communist-dominated earth."<sup>12</sup> The Congress concurred and approved a \$400 million aid package for the two countries. The Truman Doctrine, described as "the commanding guide to American foreign policy in the Cold War," had been officially established.<sup>13</sup>

Later the same year, the Truman administration received bipartisan support for the European Recovery Program, better known as the Marshall Plan, which provided the nations of Europe more than \$13 billion in aid from 1948 through 1951. U.S. leaders hoped that the West's economic recovery and ensuing prosperity would ultimately prompt Eastern European nations to reject

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<sup>11</sup>David McCullough, Truman, (New York, 1992), 548.

<sup>12</sup>Robert A. Divine, Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Recent American History (New York, 1979), 13.

<sup>13</sup>Paterson, et al., American Foreign Policy, 449.

communism. However, the Marshall Plan, like many other postwar American foreign policy initiatives, heightened the Soviet Union's security anxieties and resulted in a hardening "iron curtain."

American efforts to consolidate the Western controlled zones of Germany and to eventually reunify the war torn country "starkly exposed the great postwar schism" that had developed between the two major powers.<sup>14</sup> In June 1948 the Soviets erected a blockade around West Berlin in its own attempt to integrate the Western-controlled portions of the city with communist dominated East Germany. President Truman intimated that he would risk nuclear war over the Berlin crisis, but during the following year, as the West airlifted food and supplies into the city, direct military confrontation was averted. With no alternatives short of war, the Soviets ended the blockade in May 1949.

The Berlin crisis reenforced fears of communist aggression, and in July 1949 the U.S. Senate overwhelmingly ratified the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a comprehensive security pact with Canada and nine European nations designed to defend Western Europe from a Soviet invasion. Retired General Dwight D. Eisenhower was recalled to active duty to become the first Supreme NATO Commander. This military companion to the Marshall Plan further raised tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Moscow eventually countered NATO with a military alliance, the Warsaw Pact, comprised of Eastern European nations. The militancy of America's anti-

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<sup>14</sup>Paterson, One Every Front, 84.

communist foreign policy became institutionalized in 1950 with Truman's acceptance of NSC-68. The National Security Council document concluded that the Soviet Union was bent on world domination and that the spread of communist influence must be checked by "a much-expanded American defense establishment."<sup>15</sup>

Already dismayed by the explosion of Russia's first nuclear bomb in 1949, America had to cope the same year with the military victory of Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party over the Nationalist government. The United States had sent \$3 billion to Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists during the bloody civil war in an attempt to keep China, with its vast resources and potential markets, within the American sphere of influence. Applying a zero-sum game mentality to the Cold War, many Americans equated Truman's "loss" of China as a monumental victory for Moscow. America's prevailing belief in monolithic communism prevented any formal relationship between the United States and communist China, and Washington withheld diplomatic recognition and blocked its entrance into the United Nations.

United States Asian policy enjoyed better success in the industrial and political reconstruction of Japan, which had remained firmly under American control since the end of the war. Under the direction of General Douglas MacArthur, the Truman administration sought to "rebuild Japan as an anti-

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 92.



communist bulwark in Asia."<sup>16</sup> The small countries of Southeast Asia with their plentiful resources and strategic locales were deemed vital to Japan's sustained recovery, and, therefore, were incorporated within the security interest of the United States. After the communist Chinese victory, U.S. leaders vigilantly fended off any further communist encroachments into the region. In 1950 the Truman administration formally recognized France's puppet government in Vietnam, which received substantial U.S. military aid to help defeat a communist led insurrection.

In June 1950 communist soldiers from North Korea invaded South Korea. Recounting the failure of the West's appeasement policy at the 1938 Munich conference and the successes of postwar confrontations in Greece, Turkey and Berlin, Truman ordered American combat troops to Korea to challenge the aggressors: "This is the Greece of the Far East. If we are tough enough now there won't be any next step."<sup>17</sup> An overwhelmed South Korea had suffered heavy casualties and was in danger of losing the war until General MacArthur commanded a daring amphibious landing on Inchon which began to reverse North Korean gains.

With this new-found momentum Truman abandoned the policy of containment and attempted to "roll-back" communism. MacArthur proceeded to push the enemy northward to the North Korean and Chinese border.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 92.

<sup>17</sup>Paterson, et al., American Foreign Policy, 473.

Threatened by the rapid advancement of U.S. and U.N. forces, communist China launched a massive ground assault against the multinational troops in North Korea. MacArthur, who was later relieved of command by Truman for insubordination and for wanting to expand the war to China, was forced to retreat to back into South Korea. As the conflict bogged down the American people became increasingly disenchanted with the land war in Asia. By war's end, the original policy objective of containment had been achieved in Korea, but the intrusion of communist Chinese forces had obliterated the new strategy of roll-back. More importantly, North Korean aggression validated many conclusions reached in the U.S. defense document NSC-68 regarding communist aggression and helped to rally domestic support for its call for increased militarization. From 1950 to 1953 annual U.S. defense expenditures increased from \$13.1 billion to \$50.4 billion.

Truman's unpopular firing of MacArthur, the Korean War stalemate, the "loss" of China, and the end of America's nuclear monopoly, all contributed to a second "Red Scare" in the United States that weakened the Democratic Party's dominant position in American politics. Conservative Republicans, including Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin, capitalized upon the circumstances. They attacked the Truman administration for being "soft" on communism and engaged in red-baiting and witch-hunts searching for communist subversives. McCarthy's outlandish charges of an organized communist infiltration of the U.S. government gained widespread acceptance.

Still, the domestic hysteria had bipartisan roots. The House Un-American Activities Committee had contributed to the pandemonium, and Truman himself helped to institutionalize the fear by implementing a Loyalty Program in 1947, whereby federal job applicants and employees were investigated for links to communism. Even after McCarthy's censure by the Senate in 1954 and his death in 1957, the nation's fear of communism continued and its commitment to win the Cold War remained resolute.

Against the backdrop of events in China, Korea and the McCarthy rampage, Republican presidential nominee General Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected in 1952. Despite periodic superpower overtures for peaceful coexistence during the eight years of the Eisenhower administration, intense Cold War battles continued. Notwithstanding strident campaign rhetoric to the contrary, the new President accepted the basic tenets of Truman's containment policy. Eisenhower also feared "creeping communism," but with a penchant for a balanced budget he applied a "New Look" approach that favored foreign aid, covert operations and atomic diplomacy over the more costly reliance upon large ground forces, conventional weapons and limited wars like Korea.<sup>18</sup>

On several occasions Eisenhower applied brinkmanship, a strategy whereby the *threat* of nuclear retaliation was employed to achieve policy objectives. Ike benefitted from a significant degree of bipartisan support

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<sup>18</sup>Gaddis, Strategies of Containment, 127.

regarding foreign affairs, and in 1955, Congress authorized the Formosa Resolution, which allowed the President to use all necessary force in defense of the Nationalist Chinese island refuge, Formosa. In two separate instances Eisenhower threatened communist China over Formosa and the two small offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. Historians have debated the practicality of Eisenhower's dangerous policy, but the President successfully avoided any protracted military engagements involving large numbers of U.S. troops.

Faced with a rapidly changing Third World, Eisenhower approved a range of covert operations and foreign aid programs to counter instability attributed to leftist insurrectionists. The Central Intelligence Agency participated in the overthrow of several foreign governments, including those in Iran and Guatemala, and planned the ouster of Fidel Castro in Cuba. To augment the NATO alliance, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles arranged a series of regional defense accords with anti-communist nations in Asia and the Middle East. In Southeast Asia Eisenhower increased already substantial military and economic aid to French forces in Vietnam. After Vietnam's communist led victory over France in 1954, the President designated U.S. obligations under the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization as the rationale for supporting South Vietnam against communism. In defense of his Vietnam policy Eisenhower subscribed to the domino theory, a familiar hypothesis whereby the loss of one government to communism would lead to the successive fall of neighboring governments. This grossly flawed supposition was also applied to the unrelated

and independent activity of nationalist groups in the Middle East.

In defiance of the United States and other western nations, Egypt, lead by Gamal Abdel Nassar, seized the Suez Canal in July 1956 to help pay for construction of the Aswan Dam. The United States had recently withdrawn its offer to help build the dam when Egypt formally recognized communist China and negotiated an arms purchase with communist Czechoslovakia. Without informing the U.S., the trio of Great Britain, France, and Israel coordinated a counterattack on Egypt in late October. Eisenhower was furious with the action of the allies and feared Soviet intervention. The President soberly concluded that if the Soviets attacked British or French forces "we would be in war" and that "we may have to hit them with everything in the bucket."<sup>19</sup> Eisenhower moved quickly to defuse the situation and ultimately arranged a peaceful settlement through the United Nations. Egypt's Aswan Dam was later constructed with the support of the Soviet Union.

Not only did the Suez crisis bring the world to the brink of nuclear war, but it also overshadowed the Soviet Union's concurrent violent repression of democratic movements in Eastern Europe. According to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, it was "nothing less than tragic that at this very time, when we are on the point of winning an immense and long-hoped-for victory over Soviet colonialism in Eastern Europe, Western colonialism in Egypt was the center of

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<sup>19</sup>Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President (New York, 1990), 431.

the world's attention. It was maddening..."<sup>20</sup> In the midst of these foreign crises, Eisenhower was overwhelmingly elected to a second term as president.

The last years of the Eisenhower administration contained events of both hope and despair in the Cold War. The successful launch of the Soviet space satellite Sputnik in 1957 generated fears that the communists had eclipsed U.S. military technology and were capable of hurling intercontinental nuclear missiles towards the North American continent. Eisenhower's repeated assurances that the United States still possessed vastly superior technology and military capabilities were not entirely persuasive. The administration's political opponents, not privy to convincing secret intelligence data, made unsubstantiated charges of "bomber gaps" and "missile gaps." America's exaggerated reaction to the "Sputnik Challenge" resulted in the increased militarization of the Cold War.<sup>21</sup>

For Eisenhower, a more bona fide crisis arose in 1958, again in the Middle East. The administration had recently received congressional authority via the Eisenhower Doctrine to resist communist influence in the region. Barely two years after the Suez affair, the Iraqi government fell to a group of pro-Nassar military officers and U.S. officials feared neighboring Lebanon would follow. While the President never officially invoked the Eisenhower Doctrine, he hurriedly deployed thousands of troops to Lebanon to prevent a pro-Nassar

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 428.

<sup>21</sup>For a comprehensive study see Robert A. Divine, The Sputnik Challenge (New York, 1993).

coup. The action demonstrated Eisenhower's willingness to risk American troops in a proxy battle against alleged Soviet influence. Equally important, Eisenhower's policy toward Lebanon, like Guatemala, Iran and Vietnam previously, demonstrated America's inability to distinguish nationalism from Soviet-directed communist subversion.

Despite the continued militarization of the Cold War, Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev undertook a goodwill tour of America in the autumn of 1959. He downplayed political differences between the superpowers and stated, "We will not bury you, nor will you bury us."<sup>22</sup> Plans were arranged for a formal peace summit in Paris for the following year and Eisenhower hoped to end his presidency in an aura of cooperation. The May 1960 downing of an American high altitude spy plane over the Soviet Union doomed all thoughts of a successful conference with the Soviets. Eisenhower eventually assumed public responsibility for the military blunder but refused to offer an apology. The Soviets in turn denounced the United States and aborted the summit meeting. The Cold War raged on.

Eisenhower's management of Cold War policy had been generally compatible with that of the Truman administration. U.S. policymakers, frequently aided by bipartisan congressional support, were still unable or unwilling to distinguish between nationalism, neutralism and communism, and there were no differing assessments of U.S. security interests. Although

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<sup>22</sup>Paterson, et al., American Foreign Policy, 498.

Eisenhower held defense expenditures below Korean War levels, he helped expand the arms race to include space and missile technology. And while Eisenhower's successor pledged to be "more effective" and "more active" in the battle against international communism, the new administration's basic policies were firmly rooted in the Cold War legacies of Truman and Eisenhower.<sup>23</sup> An ardent anti-communist, President John F. Kennedy believed that the Cold War was best "waged against communism abroad, not argued at home."<sup>24</sup>

Kennedy's first major foreign policy challenge came in April 1961 with a CIA sponsored invasion of Cuba that had been organized by the Eisenhower administration. A staunch anti-communist, Kennedy supported the overthrow of Castro. Since he had chastised Eisenhower during the campaign for allowing the establishment of a communist satellite just off the Florida coast, the young President felt even more compelled to follow through with the invasion. Despite months of planning, Castro's heavily armed militia easily routed the amphibious assault. Unlike Eisenhower's previous successes in Iran and Guatemala, the Cuban expedition failed miserably. Kennedy, who had denied CIA requests for U.S. air cover, blamed the disaster on "faulty intelligence and sloppy execution."<sup>25</sup> The Bay of Pigs fiasco did not weaken Kennedy's resolve

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<sup>23</sup>Thomas G. Paterson, "Bearing The Burden: A Critical Look At JFK's Foreign Policy," The Virginia Quarterly Review 54 (Spring 1978): 200.

<sup>24</sup>Walter LaFeber, The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad since 1750 (New York, 1989), 553.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 541.



to oust Castro or win the Cold War, rather, according to historian Robert A. Divine, the lesson learned from Cuba was that "harder work, greater sacrifice, and even more reliance on military force were needed to win."<sup>26</sup>

Kennedy replaced Ike's New Look approach to containment with "Flexible Response," which in theory allowed the U.S. to respond more effectively to a wider variety of communist threats. The administration embarked on a broader military build-up to win the Cold War with new initiatives such as, paramilitary training, the Peace Corps, and the Alliance For Progress. From 1960 to 1963 Kennedy augmented military spending, including both conventional and nuclear weapons, from \$45.9 to \$53.2 billion, and with an expanded draft he greatly increased the number of people in military service. In response to Khrushchev's January 1960 pledge to support "wars of national liberation," Kennedy took personal interest in developing counterinsurgency forces needed to repel communist guerrillas.<sup>27</sup> The increasing political instability in Third World provided Kennedy the opportunity to apply these new paramilitary techniques against communist insurgents.

Kennedy's aggressive policy toward South Vietnam demonstrated the continuity of American postwar foreign policy and the new administration's intense desire to achieve a Cold War victory. Truman and Eisenhower had supported massive military aid to France and its South Vietnamese successor

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<sup>26</sup>Divine, Since 1945, 113.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 111.

government, but both had resisted temptations to involve large numbers of American troops. JFK, who as a young senator had criticized Truman for losing China to communism, tripled military aid to Vietnam and increased U.S. troop presence from 3,205 in 1961 to 16,700 in 1963. Despite these efforts, conditions in South Vietnam deteriorated and during Kennedy's three years in office more than 600 American soldiers were killed.

America's confrontations with communism under Kennedy's tutelage were not limited to proxy wars in the less-developed world. Russian demands for the removal of allied troops from West Berlin had sparked several international crises since World War II and Khrushchev, wanting to test the new American president, repeated the summons to Kennedy. The young President held "cold and firm" and refused to negotiate Berlin's future; this led Khrushchev to order the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961.<sup>28</sup> Kennedy accepted the permanent division of the city leading historian Stephen Ambrose to conclude, "The great powers had decided that Berlin, and beyond it Germany, were not worth a nuclear exchange...nothing vital had been sacrificed."<sup>29</sup> Three weeks later in response to Kennedy's continued military build-up, the Soviets ended a joint three year moratorium on nuclear testing and began a series of tests that culminated in the largest atomic explosion in history.

More aggressive maneuvering the following year that brought the two

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<sup>28</sup>Stephen E. Ambrose, Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938 (Baltimore, 1971), 282.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 284.

powers to the edge of war. The dangerous brinkmanship of the Eisenhower years paled in comparison to that of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. In mid-October an American U-2 spy plane photographed the construction of Soviet ground missile sites in Cuba. Twenty-two nuclear warheads had already been delivered. In a nationally televised address on October 22, Kennedy announced a U.S. military blockade of the small island. The President asserted that a missile launch from Cuba would be interpreted as "an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union."<sup>30</sup> Within two days the Air Force had 550 aircraft, some carrying atomic weaponry, in constant flight. Tensions peaked on October 27, when the Soviets shot down a U-2 plane flying over Cuba. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara later observed that one bomb "directed at Miami or New York or even Washington might have killed a million or 2 million people."<sup>31</sup> A peaceful solution ensued when Khrushchev offered to withdraw the missiles in return for a U.S. pledge not to invade Cuba. But a subsequent demand, the removal of U.S. missiles from Turkey, arrived from Moscow shortly thereafter. Kennedy publicly pledged not to invade Cuba and privately agreed to remove the Turkey missiles. Kennedy biographer James N. Giglio characterized the Cuban missile crisis as JFK's most significant Cold War victory.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>James N. Giglio, The Presidency of John F. Kennedy (Lawrence, KS, 1991), 240.

<sup>31</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 569.

<sup>32</sup>Giglio, Kennedy, 189-220.

After the Soviets withdrew their missiles from Cuba, relations between the Cold War antagonists showed signs of improvement as both agreed to a Washington-Moscow "hot-line," a ban against atomic weapons in space, a 65 million bushel wheat sale to Russia, and a limited nuclear test treaty that banned nuclear testing under water, in the atmosphere, or in outer space. However, the peaceful resolution of the Cuban crisis and the subsequent aura of detente did not completely thaw Cold War tensions. Soviet hardliners escalated their weapons build-up to overcome their nuclear inferiority. In Washington, the Cuban crisis had served to validate an already "arrogant belief in the efficacy of American answers to world problems through the exercise of United States power."<sup>33</sup>

By 1963 the United States operated 275 military bases in 31 countries. The number of military and other government personnel totalled more than 1.25 million. In a three year period the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) had increased by more than 600 percent from 61 to 424, the defense budget had grown by more than \$7.0 billion; and the government had implemented a \$207 million civilian nuclear fallout shelter-program. According to historian Walter LaFeber, "confidence in U.S. power and in a glamorous, active presidency had never been higher. That confidence resembled a star that beamed brightest just as it began to burn out."<sup>34</sup> President Kennedy's

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<sup>33</sup>Paterson et al., American Foreign Policy, 546.

<sup>34</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 572.

assassination in November 1963 temporarily caused the nation to look inward, but the brewing Cold War, with crises in Southeast Asia and Latin America, and persistent tensions with the Soviet Union and communist China, would return foreign policy issues to the forefront of national attention during the presidential election campaigns of 1964.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **FOREIGN POLICY AND U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, 1948-1960**

America's Cold War against international communism often influenced the country's national elections. While the exact importance of foreign policy to American voters has been difficult to gauge, the nation's postwar acceptance of internationalism caused foreign affairs to become a "major factor" in U.S. presidential elections. In his two volume work spanning elections from 1940 to 1960, Robert A. Divine demonstrated that events of the Cold War "insured the continued prominence of international considerations in American presidential politics."<sup>35</sup>

By 1947 many Americans had begun to question President Harry S. Truman's ability to govern the nation into the next decade. Some prominent Democrats, who doubted his electability in the next presidential race, attempted to draft "the glamorous general," Dwight D. Eisenhower, as their nominee. Determined to be elected president in his own right, Truman fought

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<sup>35</sup>Robert A. Divine, Foreign Policy And U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952-1960 (New York, 1974), viii.

off bitter attacks from both liberal and conservative Democrats. According to biographer David McCullough "not even Herbert Hoover in his darkest days, had been treated with such open contempt by his own party."<sup>36</sup> Ultra-liberal Henry Wallace, who was eventually nominated for president by the Progressive Citizens of America party, became a vocal critic of the administration's foreign policy. Wallace and the Progressives called for direct negotiations with the Soviet Union to end the Cold War. Southern Democrats attacked from the right. The conservative "dixiecrats" endorsed Truman's containment strategy but detested his burgeoning pro-civil rights policy. After losing a floor fight over the party's pro-civil rights platform at the Democratic national convention, the conservatives defected and formed the pro-segregationist States' Rights Party led by Strom Thurmond. Despite the party's fragmentation, Truman's control over the Democratic machinery and Eisenhower's refusal to join the fray, enabled the Missourian to win the presidential nomination on the first ballot.

Given the rancorous Democratic infighting, the Republicans were confident of winning the White House after a sixteen-year absence. At the GOP convention there was "never anything but victory in the air." The delegates renominated the popular New York governor, Thomas Dewey, who had lost to Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944 by approximately 3.5 million votes, FDR's narrowest margin of victory. A self-assured Dewey told his delegates, "Our task is to fill our victory with such meaning that mankind everywhere, yearning for

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<sup>36</sup>David McCullough, Truman (New York, 1992), 633.

freedom, will take heart and move forward..."<sup>37</sup> Operating more like an incumbent than a challenger, Dewey ran a controlled campaign that promoted national unity. He refused to debate specific issues, and guided by Senator Arthur Vandenberg and Republican strategist John Foster Dulles, Dewey generally avoided any critical commentary on international affairs.

The Russian blockade of Berlin in June 1948 and the allies massive airlift of food and supplies dominated news reports during the election. The increasingly successful airlift proved to be "one of the most brilliant American achievements of the postwar era" and worked to Truman's advantage.<sup>38</sup> Although Truman feared that "we are very close to war," advisor Clark Clifford reminded the President that "In times of crisis the American citizen tends to back up his President." Dewey, in fact, was a Cold Warrior who supported a powerful military, aid to Greece and Turkey, the Marshall Plan, and the Berlin Airlift. According to Robert Divine, the challenger "hewed closely to the bipartisan foreign policy line" and "refused to attack the Democrats on Berlin."<sup>39</sup>

At Clifford's advice, Truman "moved to the left" on domestic issues and continued his "get tough policy with the Kremlin."<sup>40</sup> Supported by cheers of

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<sup>37</sup>McCullough, Truman, 629, 642.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 631.

<sup>39</sup>Robert A. Divine, Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Recent American History (New York, 1979), 17, 22-23.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 201.



"Give'em hell, Harry," Truman crisscrossed the nation by rail. His stump speeches emphasized domestic issues whereby he condemned the "Republican 'do-nothing' 80th Congress" and appealed to the Democratic Party's stalwart supporters: labor, farmers, intellectuals, city bosses, southerners, and the working poor. Truman preferred to bypass his opponent and level attacks on the conservative wing of the Republican Party, whom the President claimed would "dismantle the progress made by the New Deal and in foreign affairs, retreat back into isolationism, which would be disastrous for the country and the world." "Some things are worth fighting for" he exclaimed, "We must fight isolationists and reactionaries, the profiteers and the privileged class..."<sup>41</sup>

Truman's strident anti-communist policy appealed to the large block of European ethnic voters, which led his biographer David McCullough to conclude that "for no other reason than his stand on foreign policy, Truman had an excellent chance of winning their support." At the risk of alienating oil rich Arab nations, Truman salvaged the volatile Jewish vote by extending de facto recognition to the new Israeli nation in May 1947. As the dark horse in the campaign, Truman was forced to differentiate himself from Dewey, and he chose to balance his Cold War rhetoric with that of a peace candidate. He warned voters to "'Keep your bullets bright and you powder dry'...we will get peace in this world." With tensions running high over the Berlin crisis, Truman privately confided "It's all so futile. Dewey, Wallace, the cockeyed southerners

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<sup>41</sup>McCullough, Truman, 661, 677.

and if I win...I'll probably have a Russian war on my hands."<sup>42</sup>

Probable war against the Soviet Union had promoted Henry Wallace to run against the incumbent. He had defined the Truman Doctrine as "a curious mixture of power politics and international carpetbagging."<sup>43</sup> The entrance of the Progressives into the campaign temporarily elevated foreign policy to the forefront of public view. Wallace blamed the U.S. for the Cold War, denounced the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, demanded the recall of American troops stationed abroad, and advocated the destruction of America's nuclear arsenal. He believed that direct negotiation with the Soviets was the only viable way to end the Cold War. Interest in the Wallace candidacy began to wane during the year as the ongoing Berlin crisis seemed to validate mainstream charges of communist led aggression. Furthermore, Wallace failed to fully repudiate support from the Communist Party and his Progressive "peace party" was increasingly portrayed by opponents as a tool of Moscow.

Truman's opponent on the right, Thomas Dewey sought to exploit the issue of communists in the U.S. government. In mid-summer 1948, witnesses before the House Un-American Activities Committee testified that there were numerous spies in the Truman administration and accused a former State Department official, Alger Hiss, of participating in a subversive communist network. The news electrified Washington. To make matters worse for the

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 651, 676, 683.

<sup>43</sup>Robert A. Divine, Foreign Policy And U.S. Presidential Elections, 1940-1948 (New York, 1974), 170.

Democrats, Hiss had been an active supporter of Roosevelt's New Deal and Truman's Fair Deal programs. Dewey recommended that voters "elect an administration that simply won't appoint them (communists) in the first place." Throughout the campaign, the Republican claimed that "Communists and fellow travelers [have] risen to positions of trust in our government...[and yet] the head of our own government called the exposure of Communists in our government 'a red herring.'" Truman responded by branding Dewey's charges a "smoke screen" designed to hide the inadequacies of the Republican Party. The President boasted further that his Loyalty Program had "proven the loyalty of 99.7% of all federal workers" and that "It was not Republican talk that checked the Communist tide, but programs like the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan."<sup>44</sup>

Truman and some of his campaign advisors believed that they needed "a bold move" to demonstrate the President's sincere desire for world peace. In what became known as the Vinson mission, Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson was asked to go to Moscow to hold a private consultation with Joseph Stalin over the Berlin crisis. Vinson had no diplomatic experience and when Secretary of State George C. Marshall heard of the plan he killed it immediately. After the press reported news of the aborted mission, Truman was accused of the cardinal Cold War sin, appeasement. Dewey, ever confident of victory, told reporters that the current mismanagement of the government would soon be

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<sup>44</sup>McCullough, Truman, 674, 679.

rectified "If Harry Truman would just keep his hands off things for another few weeks! Particularly, if he will keep his hands off foreign policy, about which he knows considerably less than nothing." By the end of the campaign, a desperate Truman leveled a rare and vicious blow at the Republican; he proclaimed, "a vote for Dewey was a vote for fascism."<sup>45</sup>

Dewey's low-key strategy designed to avoid mistakes appeared to be effective as most political analysts predicted a GOP victory. The Republican nominee demonstrated his confidence late in the campaign by embarking upon a week long vacation. By contrast, Truman refused to concede defeat and continued his exhaustive touring. The incumbent's hard work and balanced strategy of remaining firm against communism and appealing to the New Deal coalition succeeded brilliantly. In a dramatic upset victory, Truman defeated the Dewey by more than two million votes. The President collected 330 electoral votes compared to only 189 for Dewey. The Strom Thurmond and the "dixiecrats" managed to collect 38 electoral votes from four southern states while Wallace and the Progressives failed to capture even one state.

There can be no doubt that Truman's relentless campaigning on New Deal domestic issues was the most important factor to voters in 1948, but David McCullough added that "The precarious state of the world also appeared to have benefitted the Truman campaign, and particularly as it became clear that the Berlin Airlift was a resounding success." In retrospect, most political

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 685, 687, 700.

analysts have agreed with Clark Clifford's assessment that, "Dewey's whole campaign was a mistake...They were greedy and dumb, and anxious to get back to power."<sup>46</sup> The arrogant GOP had attempted to utilize the postwar bipartisan foreign policy to their advantage and consequently neglected "promising" and "ripe" issues of the continued suppression of Eastern Europe, the "loss" of China, and Truman's new Palestine policy. Republicans never again campaigned on a completely bipartisan foreign policy, and the stunned GOP had to wait another four years to correct their mistakes.<sup>47</sup>

By the summer of 1952, President Truman's public approval rating had declined to an abysmal 26 percent. Weighed down by McCarthyism, the Korean War stalemate, and charges of corruption in government, the President chose not to seek reelection and instead contemplated a suitable successor. Many Democratic leaders were disappointed to learn that the Republicans had successfully induced the ever popular Dwight Eisenhower to run for their party's presidential nomination. The GOP's powerful eastern liberal wing backed the Eisenhower candidacy which came to symbolize "collective security and a European-first orientation."<sup>48</sup>

Only "Mr. Republican," Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, seriously challenged Ike for the nomination. While generally conservative on domestic matters,

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 713, 717.

<sup>47</sup>Divine, U.S. Presidential Elections, 1940-1948, 225, 242.

<sup>48</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. ed., History of American Presidential Elections, 1789-1968 (New York, 1971), IV:3225.

Eisenhower differed greatly from Taft on foreign affairs. Ike, a full fledged internationalist, eagerly supported the Truman Doctrine and personally oversaw in the implementation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Taft, on the other hand, was a vocal critic of economic multilateralism and was less willing to extend American commitments abroad. At best the senator was a begrudging Cold Warrior who was willing to condone the Marshall Plan and aid to Greece, but not the long term deployment of U.S. troops under NATO. When the two wings of the Republican Party squared off at the Chicago National Convention, polling data indicated that only the widely popular general would be able to defeat the leading Democratic nominees. By the end of the GOP convention, most Republican delegates had reached the same conclusion and nominated Eisenhower for the presidency.

The selection of Eisenhower's opponent proved more complicated. Ultimately the Democrats compromised on Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson. As a former Assistant Secretary of State and Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the Roosevelt administration, the eloquent governor could legitimately campaign as both a New Dealer and an expert in foreign affairs. Many party leaders and intellectuals supported the "scholarly and reflective" Stevenson despite the glaring weakness that he was generally unknown to the national electorate.<sup>49</sup>

Forced to respond to repeated Republican attacks on Truman's Asian

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., IV:3236.

policy, Stevenson argued that the United States could not have "saved" China from communism in 1949 without starting World War III. Furthermore, he stressed that bombing China during the Korean War would have caused the same result. Stevenson reminded the GOP that there had been bipartisan support to demilitarize Korea after World War II, and that there had also been bipartisan support for Truman's original decision to deploy U.S. combat troops to repel the North Korean invasion. Had the President not acted swiftly, he said, communism "could have picked away at the free world and engulfed more millions, piece by piece...[until] we would have had to fight." Stevenson also emphasized that the West could also have "lost" Japan and East Asia.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to overcoming his anonymity, Stevenson attempted to distinguish himself from the discredited Truman administration, a daunting task. As a firm anti-communist, the governor blamed the Cold War on Soviet aggression and lauded Truman's activist foreign policy. His speeches often echoed Truman's 1948 campaign, as he favored a powerful military "not with a view toward war but with a view toward preventing war and negotiating the conditions of peace." Stevenson also cautioned Americans that "victory was not always possible"; since the nation's resources were finite, its goals had to be realistic.<sup>51</sup>

Also reminiscent of Truman four years earlier, the Democratic nominee

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 3254.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 3253.

linked Eisenhower's candidacy to "reckless" right wing Republicans, who had simultaneously called for the bombing of China and for the removal of U.S. troops from Europe. He attacked the general's vague call for the "liberation" of Eastern Europe. Such a policy, he assured voters, would lead to war with the Soviet Union. The governor also criticized Ike's proposal to reduce defense spending by relying more heavily upon a nuclear deterrent and the Air Force. Stevenson argued that a "high budget, high taxes, inflation, even deaths in Korea, were the price America must pay to maintain freedom."<sup>52</sup>

Stevenson struggled to reassemble the vital coalition of New Deal voters, and mid-way through the contest he asked Truman to join the campaign. An enthusiastic Truman went on the attack. Utilizing the same strategy he employed against Dewey, the President portrayed General Eisenhower as a captive of the party's conservative wing and warned voters to "beware of the isolationists: they would cut foreign aid, slash the defense budget, and embark upon a reckless policy of 'liberation.'" He accused the Republicans of running a campaign of "fear and deception" and told voters they could choose between "stopping Communism and retreating before the red menace or plunging the world into atomic warfare."<sup>53</sup>

Unlike his predecessor in the 1948 election, Eisenhower planned a vigorous and aggressive national campaign. First he moved to solidify

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 3254.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 3251, 3257.



Republican support for the ticket, which meant a rapprochement with Taft conservatives. By September, Senator Taft had stated publicly that he agreed with Ike "100 per cent" on domestic issues and "to a large extent" on foreign affairs. The Democrats created a minor stir for the ticket by chastising Eisenhower for "surrendering" to the right wing, but most voters appeared unconcerned with the nominee's positioning. A more serious controversy arose in October when news broke that Eisenhower had deleted from a prepared speech a "strong rebuke" of GOP Senator Joseph McCarthy and "staunch defense" of Truman's Secretary of State George Marshall, whom the Wisconsin senator had called a "traitor."<sup>54</sup> The political mistake seemed to substantiate the Democrats' association of Ike with the right wing. An embarrassed Eisenhower deeply regretted the blunder and in later speeches lauded Marshall as a great patriot.

General Eisenhower campaigned against "creeping socialism" at home and Truman's "inept waging of the Cold War abroad."<sup>55</sup> He referred to Washington as a place of "waste and extravagance and inefficiency; of incompetence...; of corruption...; of bungling in our affairs at home; of fumbling in the life and death matter of war and peace."<sup>56</sup> Eisenhower promised a strong military with "great retaliatory power" and a "drastic

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 3242, 3245.

<sup>55</sup>Divine, Since 1945, 51.

<sup>56</sup>Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, IV:3242.

reduction" in the federal budget that would stimulate economic growth.<sup>57</sup> He also called for a new foreign policy of "liberation" intended to support the suppressed peoples of Eastern Europe announcing "we will abandon the policy of mere containment and actively develop hope" and "never desist in our aid to those shackled" by communism.<sup>58</sup>

As the campaign progressed, foreign affairs and particularly the Korean War became the election's most important issue. In a simplistic but persuasive statement, GOP stalwart Thomas Dewey proclaimed that "Stalin is most afraid of Eisenhower, certainly not Stevenson." Public discontent with the Korean War escalated as troop casualties mounted and the stalemate continued. In January only 25 percent of voters considered Korea the most important problem facing the nation, but by late October the number increased to 52 percent. Eisenhower had started the campaign backing Truman's Korean War policy, however, he later accused the President of "squandering American prestige and power."<sup>59</sup> The closest Eisenhower came to offering a solution to the Korean stalemate came one month before the election when he pledged to build up South Korean defenses and announced "If there must be a war there, let it be Asians against Asians..."<sup>60</sup> Stevenson contended that this "proposal of a quick

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 3240.

<sup>58</sup>Divine, Since 1945, 44, 51.

<sup>59</sup>Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, IV:3249.

<sup>60</sup>Divine, Since 1945, 52.

and easy way out of Korea..is false." Two weeks later, Ike delivered what turned out to be the fatal blow while campaigning in Michigan; he told voters that if peace requires "a personal trip to Korea...I shall go to Korea."<sup>61</sup> It was futile for Stevenson to counter with any comparable pledge. Historian Robert Divine concluded that "The promise to go to Korea, coming from the man identified in the public mind with the victory in World War II, clinched the election."<sup>62</sup>

Eisenhower received more votes than any previous presidential candidate in history, 33.9 million, and he won victories in 39 of 48 states. Unlike the 1948 election when domestic issues dominated the campaign, the single most decisive issue in 1952 proved to be the Korean War. Pollster Louis Harris concluded that the war issue "was easily the Achilles heel of the Democratic campaign."<sup>63</sup> The effects of war abroad would significantly influence voters again in the presidential election of 1956.

Key Republicans had begun to pressure President Eisenhower to run for a second term immediately after his recovery from a massive heart attack in January 1956. With no viable successor in place and with his physician's approval, Eisenhower announced his intention to seek reelection. Although he planned a limited campaign, Ike told advisors that he still had to "prove to the

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<sup>61</sup>Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, IV:3249.

<sup>62</sup>Divine, Since 1945, 52.

<sup>63</sup>Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, IV:3260.

American people I am a rather healthy individual."<sup>64</sup> The President's approval rating was a stellar 71 percent in Spring of 1956 and with a vibrant domestic economy and the world at peace, the Democrats' chances of unseating Eisenhower appeared bleak.

Democratic hopes were buoyed in June when the sixty-five-year-old President was hospitalized with ileitis, raising serious questions over his physical ability to lead the nation for another four years. Adlai Stevenson reemerged as the Democratic presidential nominee after a "hectic struggle" against Estes Kefauver, Averell Harriman and Lyndon Johnson. Once again Stevenson attempted to reconstruct the New Deal coalition of voters that had proved successful for Truman in 1948. He transversed the country and campaigned with "great conviction." In attempts to capitalize on the "health issue" Stevenson frequently described Ike as "a part-time leader."<sup>65</sup> Given Ike's bipartisan successes with Congress on matters of defense and foreign affairs, political advisors urged the Democratic nominee to subordinate foreign policy to domestic policy during the campaign. In the summer of 1956 during the beginning of the Suez crisis, Democratic Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson reconfirmed bipartisan support for the President by telling newsmen, "Politics stop at the water's edge when the security of our country is at

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<sup>64</sup>Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President (New York, 1990), 420.

<sup>65</sup>Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, 3350.

stake."<sup>66</sup> The Democratic nominee reluctantly agreed but still managed to raise two defense issues in a rare early speech devoted to foreign affairs. Stevenson called for an end to the draft and implementation of an all voluntary professional military. But his main goal was a pledge to stop all nuclear testing. A negotiated test ban accord with the Soviets, he claimed, would eradicate dangerous radiation fallout and curtail the arms race. He denounced Eisenhower's foreign affairs management as "guile in international dealings," and argued that Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, not the President's diplomacy, had led to the end of the Korean War.<sup>67</sup>

The Republicans seized the opportunity to make foreign policy a central campaign issue. Most Americans disagreed with Stevenson's assertion and credited Eisenhower with negotiating the truce in Korea, which proved a "powerful arrow in the Republican campaign quiver right down to election day."<sup>68</sup> The country's general economic prosperity negated the importance of Stevenson's stance on domestic issues, and the Commander In Chief convinced voters that the former governor's positions on defense policy were "unsound and dangerous."<sup>69</sup> Eisenhower even referred to the nuclear test ban idea as "a

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<sup>66</sup>Divine, U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952-1960, 120.

<sup>67</sup>Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, 3351.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 3350.

<sup>69</sup>Divine, Since 1945, 80.

theatrical gesture."<sup>70</sup> Campaigning on his record of peace and prosperity, Eisenhower proclaimed "everything's booming but the guns."<sup>71</sup> The President's gradual recovery from his bout with ileitis and the rise of an international crisis quickly eliminated any chances of a Democratic victory.

Eisenhower's management of the October-November 1956 Suez crisis was regarded by biographer Stephen Ambrose as one of his "greatest moments as President." The President feared Russian intervention on Egypt's behalf and told cabinet members, "if those fellows start something, we may have to hit'em" and "we would be justified in taking military action even if Congress were not in session." On November 5, the day before the presidential election, "all hell broke loose" as British and French forces landed in Egypt. To the surprise of most nations the United States condemned the aggression of its allies, backed the sovereignty of Egypt and utilized the United Nations to arrange a peaceful settlement. Fortunately for Eisenhower, the Suez crisis overshadowed the United State's unwillingness to aid the simultaneous outbreaks of nationalism in Poland and Hungary, which would have fully exposed the hollowness of the administration's long stated "liberation" policy.<sup>72</sup>

Stevenson's decision not to attack Ike on his Middle East and Eastern European policies was reminiscent of Dewy's handling of the Berlin crisis in

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<sup>70</sup>Ambrose, Eisenhower, 419.

<sup>71</sup>William E. Leuchtenburg, A Troubled Feast: American Society Since 1945 (Boston, 1973), 86.

<sup>72</sup>Ambrose, Eisenhower, 422-23, 430-31.

1948. Not wanting to jeopardize Eisenhower's efforts to peacefully resolve a perilous situation, Stevenson was unable to capitalize on world events. Had the Democratic nominee developed themes concerning the dangers of brinkmanship and massive retaliation during the campaign, he would have been able to utilize the international crises to his advantage. Instead, as many as three million voters switched from Stevenson to Eisenhower during the last two weeks of the contest. Historian Robert A. Divine described election day as the "tensest moment in the Cold War since the Berlin blockade in 1948," and the country rallied behind Eisenhower just as it had with Truman in 1948.<sup>73</sup> Eisenhower's crisis management combined with the nation's underlying economic prosperity to earn the GOP its first successful presidential reelection since Ulysses S. Grant. The outcome of the 1956 election was viewed as "the most spectacular presidential victory" in twenty years.<sup>74</sup> The strong economy prevented Stevenson from consolidating enough voter support behind his domestic agenda, and his ideas to change the defense policies of the nation's most popular living general proved pointless. A Stevenson biographer concluded, that it was "impossible to defeat a president whose aces in the hole were peace, prosperity - and war."<sup>75</sup>

World events during Eisenhower's second term raised Cold War tensions

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<sup>73</sup>Divine, Since 1945, 81.

<sup>74</sup>Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, IV:3353.

<sup>75</sup>Divine, Since 1945, 82.

to new levels. The 1957 Sputnik launch created a "crisis of confidence" in the United States that impacted both domestic and foreign policy far into the 1960s.<sup>76</sup> Capitalizing on the public's fear of Soviet technological advances, the Democrats attacked Eisenhower for allowing a "missile gap, space gap, limited-war gap."<sup>77</sup> Using high altitude spy planes, the administration knew there were no such gaps but could not refute the charges publicly without jeopardizing national security. The Sputnik launch, increasing Soviet influence in Cuba, and Khrushchev's militant rhetoric combined to elevate the importance of foreign affairs in the 1960 presidential election.

The May 1960 downing of a U-2 reconnaissance plane inside Soviet territory shattered Eisenhower's hopes of ending his presidency during a thaw in the Cold War. The President's refusal to offer the Soviet Union an official apology led Russian Premier Nikita Khrushchev to denounce the United States and prematurely disband the Paris summit conference. American-Soviet relations also worsened over Cuba. Fidel Castro, who had become increasingly hostile towards the United States after the 1959 revolution, began building a military and economic alliance with the Soviet Union. In response, Eisenhower ordered a 95 percent reduction in Cuban sugar imports in July 1960. Two months later Khrushchev embarked upon a "stormy" twenty-five day trip to New York to attend the United Nation's General Assembly meeting. In fiery

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<sup>76</sup>Robert A. Divine, The Sputnik Challenge (New York, 1993), xv.

<sup>77</sup>Divine, U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952-1960, 216.



speeches Khrushchev criticized the United States and the U.N. for policies toward Africa and warned that Soviet missiles were being manufactured "like sausages."<sup>78</sup> Khrushchev's U.N. mission emphasized the growth of the Soviet military, economic, and political strength, which presented renewed threats to the United States. In 1960 the Republicans had hoped to campaign on Eisenhower's eight year record of peace, but these Cold War developments vitiated that position and opened the door for Democratic attacks.

In all likelihood Eisenhower could have been reelected to a third term had it been allowable. After serving two terms as vice president, Richard M. Nixon was virtually assured the Republican nomination. Only the popular and wealthy governor of New York, Nelson A. Rockefeller, was considered a serious competitor. A former assistant to President Eisenhower and the only Republican to win a major election victory in 1956, Rockefeller had become a vocal critic of the administration's domestic and foreign policies. When early polling data reflected a large Nixon lead, the governor withdrew his candidacy. Certain of victory, Nixon moved to solidify the support of the party's powerful eastern liberal wing and arranged for a private meeting with Rockefeller. Nixon agreed to strengthen the convention platform's call for increased defense spending and to liberalize various domestic planks. The private pact provoked outrage among the party's conservative wing, but the Republicans emerged from their convention unified.

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 257.

Nixon's acceptance address reflected the staunch Cold War rhetoric that was critical to both candidates throughout the campaign: "We are in a race...for the survival in which our lives, our fortunes, our liberties are at stake...It is not enough for us to reply that our aim is to contain communism, to defend the free world against communism...; the only answer...is a strategy of victory for the free world." Nixon also took the opportunity to attack a leading Democratic presidential candidate, Senator John F. Kennedy, who had suggested that Eisenhower apologize to the Soviet Union for the failed U-2 mission. Nixon called the senator's suggestion "rash and impulsive" and defended the flights as necessary to "save our country from surprise attack."<sup>79</sup>

There was no shortage of candidates for the 1960 Democratic nomination. Standard bearer Adlai Stevenson and Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson both coveted the nomination but refused to pursue it overtly. Missouri Senator Stuart Symington, who campaigned on the single issue of increased defense preparedness, appeared to be a potential compromise candidate. Only Senators Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota and Kennedy of Massachusetts battled for convention delegates via the party's primary elections. Given Kennedy's comparatively weak legislative record and the fact that he was Catholic, most party leaders considered him the underdog. But Kennedy was popular with voters, and his well financed and organized campaign produced important victories in the Wisconsin and West Virginia

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<sup>79</sup>Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, IV:3553-54, 3556.

primaries, which ultimately forced Humphrey from the contest. Even the late entrance of the powerful Johnson, who had called Kennedy the "boyish appeaser of the Soviets," could not derail the Massachusetts team.<sup>80</sup> Kennedy had effectively cultivated local and state party leaders and systematically accumulated enough delegates to win the Democratic nomination on the first ballot.

Many political insiders viewed the 1960 presidential election as a "contest between two ruthlessly ambitious young men, both smoothly skilled in politics and public relations, and both possessing more cool reserve than deep emotional convictions." Television had replaced newspapers as the most influential medium to voters, and both candidates agreed to a series of televised debates. The first debate held in late September constituted a major turning point for JFK as his impressive performance on national television helped solidify support for his candidacy within the Democratic Party. Although Nixon reassured voters of his "experience," he was clearly less telegenic than his opponent and failed to generate any unexpected enthusiasm. During the second debate on October 7, Nixon "drew first blood" and "scored heavily" on the issue of defending the small Chinese islands of Quemoy and Matsu, which were occupied by Nationalist Chinese forces. Kennedy, who thought the islands "indefensible," had criticized Eisenhower for risking war with communist China over their protection. Nixon responded by saying "that

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 3460.

is the same kind of wooly thinking that led to disaster for America in Korea," and he pledged not to "yield one inch of 'free soil'" to the communists.<sup>81</sup> Overall the debates were fairly close but probably benefitted Kennedy more than Nixon.

Since both men had traveled extensively abroad and preferred discussing foreign affairs over domestic policy, defense policy evolved as a central issue in the campaign. Each candidate sought to dramatize the importance of foreign policy leadership as an decisive issue, even though they both agreed that the objective of U.S. foreign policy was outright victory in the Cold War. The candidates regularly accused each other of being "impulsive" in their decision making and inclined to "shoot from the hip."<sup>82</sup> Nixon, who as a congressman in 1948 had gained prominence as an anti-communist zealot by leading the crusade against Alger Hiss, resolved in 1960 to defend the Eisenhower record and reconstruct his contribution to it. Senator Kennedy was also an established Cold Warrior who had condemned Truman in 1948 for the "loss" of China and Eisenhower in 1960 for the "loss" of Cuba. Still, when pressed by reporters, Kennedy admitted that he basically "endorsed" Truman's and Eisenhower's foreign policies. As a result, the foreign affairs debate primarily revolved around a partisan critique of eight years of Republican management of the Cold War and voter evaluation of the candidates' leadership abilities.

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., IV:3450, 3463, 3465.

<sup>82</sup>Divine, U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952-1960, 275.

Kennedy presented his foreign affairs platform within his broad campaign theme of "lets get the country moving again." Ultimately he called for increased military preparedness and proclaimed that he could wage the Cold War more effectively. Kennedy characterized Republican policies as ones of "retreat, defeat and weakness" and attacked Eisenhower without naming the popular president.<sup>83</sup> The Democratic nominee said that he "deplored the greater Russian progress in space, the decline of U.S. prestige abroad, and the lag in America's appeal to the developing world."<sup>84</sup> Kennedy leveled direct blows at Nixon and emphasized the Cuba issue: "I wasn't the vice president who presided over the communization of Cuba," and "I'm not impressed with those who say they stood up to Khrushchev when Castro has defied them 90 miles away."<sup>85</sup> As the campaign progressed, Kennedy espoused such fierce Cold War rhetoric that historian Thomas Paterson contended "John Foster Dulles could not have said it better."<sup>86</sup> For example he said:

I think there is a danger that history will make a judgment that these were the days when the tide began to run out for the United States. These were the times when the communist tide began to pour in. The enemy is lean and hungry and the United States is the only sentinel at the gate. The enemy is the Communist system itself—implacable, unceasing in its drive for world domination. For this is not a struggle for the supremacy of arms alone—it is also a struggle for supremacy between two conflicting ideologies: Freedom under God versus ruthless, godless tyranny. [T]he only thing that will deter Mr. Khrushchev from loosing his hounds of

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 241.

<sup>84</sup>Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, IV:3464.

<sup>85</sup>Divine, U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952-1960, 276.

<sup>86</sup>Thomas G. Paterson, "Bearing The Burden: A Critical Look At JFK's Foreign Policy," The Virginia Quarterly Review, 54 (Spring 1978): 200.

hell on us will be a strong U.S.. I want to outdo him...outproduce him."<sup>87</sup>

Despite the Democratic nominee's rhetoric, Nixon warned that a Kennedy presidency would be a throw back to the Truman administration and the Vice President proclaimed that the country had "left the policy of retreat behind us in 1953." The Republican repeatedly recalled his performance against Khrushchev in the famous "kitchen debate" as a proof of his experience and ability in foreign affairs. In July 1959, Nixon had embarked upon a good-will mission to Russia where he encountered an irritated Khrushchev. At an exhibition displaying an American model home, the two men became embroiled in a bitter argument. The whole affair had been captured on film and the footage displayed Nixon "standing toe to toe with the Soviet leader, his finger in the Russian's face, defending American honor and integrity in an admirable fashion."<sup>88</sup>

Recognizing the closeness of the contest, the Vice President asked for and received Eisenhower's direct support. Privately Ike had confided that he would do "almost anything to avoid turning my chair and the country over to Kennedy," and he campaigned vigorously, though more in support of his own record than as a proponent of Nixon. Historian Stephen Ambrose concluded that Ike's public comments "never constituted that clear-cut, total endorsement Nixon so desperately needed. The total effect was almost devastating." Because

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 200-01, and Divine, U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952-1960, 242-44.

<sup>88</sup>Divine, U.S. Presidential Elections 1952-1960, 194, 244, 261.

Nixon continued to emphasize his experience in decision making, reporters hounded Eisenhower to provide an example of Nixon's input into a major policy decision. Ike responded rashly, "If you give me a week I might think of one. I don't remember." The Democrats and the press relished the blunder.<sup>89</sup> In a last ditch effort reminiscent of the 1952 Korea pledge, Nixon promised to send Eisenhower on a good-will mission to communist bloc nations.

Unlike Eisenhower's Korean pledge, Nixon's offer was made to no avail. Kennedy captured one of the narrowest victories in presidential election history, defeating Nixon in twenty-three key states, but by a popular margin of only 113,000 votes. The results left Eisenhower depressed; he viewed Kennedy's victory as a "repudiation" of his eight years in the White House. But the President's contributions to the campaign, according to his biographer, had been "worse than unhelpful—it actually cost Nixon votes, and probably the election."<sup>90</sup>

Foreign policy had been central to JFK's theme of "getting the country moving again" and to Nixon's theme of "experience," and the militant tone of the dual campaigns demonstrated that fervent anti-communism was the only viable foreign policy position to take in U.S. presidential politics. But on election day that issue was not the most decisive to undecided voters. The handling of domestic issues proved more definitive, and here, Kennedy's ability

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<sup>89</sup>Ambrose, Eisenhower, 522, 524-25.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 520, 529.

to minimize his biggest handicap and his decision to balance the ticket with a southerner proved brilliant. Kennedy advisor Theodore C. Sorenson concluded that "The single factor influencing more swing-voters...was not unemployment or foreign policy...but Kennedy's religion."<sup>91</sup> The combination of Catholic Democrats and those Protestants willing to overlook Kennedy's religion, who had voted Republican in 1956, more than offset the number of votes lost on that issue in 1960. Furthermore, Kennedy's investment in the Johnson vice presidential nomination also paid handsome dividends as the ticket swept the Deep South including a reversal of thirty-four crucial electoral votes Eisenhower collected in Louisiana and Texas in 1956.

Despite the narrowness of his election victory, Kennedy enjoyed widespread popularity throughout all three years of his presidency. In many respects this was quite remarkable given ongoing crises at home, in places like Oxford, Mississippi, and Birmingham, Alabama, and abroad in Germany, Vietnam, and Cuba. In early 1963, Kennedy had begun to look forward to his reelection bid the following year, and "within the confines of the White House predicted - - and fervently hoped - - that Barry Goldwater would be nominated" by the Republicans. Kennedy and Goldwater had become acquainted in the Senate in 1952 and they developed a genuine friendship over the years, but the two men "stood diametrically opposed [to each other]...on every major issue." By autumn 1963, Senator Goldwater, who in only his second term as senator

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<sup>91</sup>Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, IV:3469.



had become a leader of his party's conservative wing, also looked forward to a high profile ideological contest against Kennedy. The President foresaw one of the "most interesting...campaigns...in a long time" and anticipated "a hard, close fight" in most states.<sup>92</sup> Kennedy began his campaign planning early and eagerly anticipated a revival of the 1960 presidential debates. Even his fateful trip to Texas in November 1963 had been a thinly disguised campaign trip.

After Kennedy's untimely death, his successor, Lyndon Johnson carefully channelled the nation's grief into support for major federal legislation. The Texan's application of presidential power in 1964 was both graceful and effective, and consequently ensured his own presidential nomination for the Democratic Party. Johnson's ascendance to the presidency appalled GOP front-runner Barry Goldwater, who reversed his decision to run for the Republican nomination. Preliminary polling data suggested that the fight for the GOP nomination would be difficult for all contenders, and that President Johnson would likely trounce any Republican candidate. But the ideological challenge proved too tantalizing to the independent Goldwater, who in a relatively short career in government had established an impressive track record of achieving upset political victories. Encouraged by considerable support for his candidacy which had been mounting for several years, the Arizonan threw his hat into the ring.

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<sup>92</sup>Theodore C. Sorensen, Kennedy (New York, 1965), 753.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE RISE OF A MAVERICK:

#### Barry Morris Goldwater, 1909-1963

The son of an Arizona dry-goods merchant, Barry M. Goldwater was born in 1909. As a youth, he went east to attend Staunton Military Academy in Lexington, Virginia, where he graduated in the middle of his class. Young Goldwater excelled in athletics and earned satisfactory grades. After graduation in 1928, he returned to his native state and enrolled at the University of Arizona in Tucson. The following year his father, Baron Goldwater, died, and shortly thereafter Barry left college to begin a career in the family's department store, aptly named Goldwaters. Much to his regret, Goldwater never returned to college and later confessed that it was "the biggest mistake of my life."<sup>93</sup> In 1934 he married Margaret "Peggy" Johnson, the daughter of the wealthy Ray Prescott Johnson, President of Warner Gear Company. Within two years the Goldwaters celebrated the birth of their first child, Joanne. Eventually they would raise four children, two boys and two girls.

Goldwater, described as a "master merchandiser," applied ingenuity and

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<sup>93</sup>Barry M. Goldwater and Jack Casserly, Goldwater (New York, 1988), 55.

natural sales ability to the family business and in 1937 became president of the company.<sup>94</sup> He was proud of the firm's relative success during the Depression and boasted "we didn't fire anybody....We never sued anyone....We never missed a payroll."<sup>95</sup> Goldwater was also active outside of the family business; he enjoyed outdoor photography, reading, and tinkering with machinery and radios. He became an accomplished aviator, and in 1940 he published the first of several books on Arizona entitled, Journey Down the River of Canyons. During the summer of 1941, Goldwater foresaw direct U.S. intervention in World War II and vigorously supported the war mobilization effort as chairman of the Military Affairs Committee of the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce. He hoped ultimately to fly fighter planes in the Army Air Corps, but his request was denied as the military "took a dim view in those days of 32-year-olds with astigmatism."<sup>96</sup>

Determined to serve in the Air Corps, Goldwater arranged for a first lieutenant's commission and was assigned as an air-to-air gunnery instructor at training stations in Phoenix and Yuma, Arizona. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Goldwater seized an opportunity to fly non-combat cargo planes in the China-Burma-India theater with the Air Corps Ferry Command. Despite repeated requests for transfer to the Bombing Command, Goldwater never

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<sup>94</sup>Dean Smith, The Goldwaters Of Arizona (Flagstaff, AZ, 1986), 185.

<sup>95</sup>Barry M. Goldwater, With No Apologies: The Personal and Political Memoirs of United States Senator Barry M. Goldwater (New York, 1979), 26.

<sup>96</sup>Jack Bell, Mr. Conservative: Barry Goldwater (Garden City, NY, 1962), 52.

engaged in direct combat. By the end of the war, he had been promoted to lieutenant colonel and served a brief stint as a pilot instructor in southern California before returning to Arizona. At the request of the Arizona governor, Goldwater helped organize and command the local Air National Guard.<sup>97</sup>

Military service had a pronounced effect on Goldwater. It had exposed him to problems outside of Arizona and intensified his interest in world affairs, which until then had been largely influenced by voracious reading of materials such as F.A. von Hayek's The Road To Serfdom and Carl von Clausewitz's On War. Goldwater believed that U.S. isolationism after the first world war had contributed to the outbreak of World War II and that future wars could only be prevented through a commitment to military superiority. He was also developing perspectives on domestic issues. Here the primary influence came from his uncle Morris Goldwater, an Arizona pioneer, who served as mayor of Prescott for more than thirty years. Morris had also participated in the Arizona territorial government and was a founding member of the state's Democratic party. Goldwater described his uncle as a Jeffersonian Democrat who denounced high taxation and large central government.<sup>98</sup>

After the war Goldwater resumed his management duties at the family stores, working with his younger brother Robert. But these business responsibilities became mundane; and he actively pursued many outside

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<sup>97</sup>Rob Wood and Dean Smith, Barry Goldwater (New York, 1961), 73.

<sup>98</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 61.

interests including the U.S. Interior Department's Advisory Commission on Indian Affairs, the Arizona Interstate Stream Commission, the Colorado River Commission, the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, the YMCA and the Boy Scouts of America. In 1949 Goldwater successfully ran for the Phoenix City Council on a nonpartisan reform platform. The forty-year-old claimed that his election victory had resulted from his "straight talk" and added that "Westerners often admire a man more for standing tall than being right."<sup>99</sup> In 1950, he played a crucial role in the Arizona gubernatorial campaign of Republican radio broadcaster J. Howard Pyle. As Pyle's campaign manager, he logged more than 20,000 flight miles across the state and earned the respect and admiration of Arizona's Republican Party leaders. Goldwater interpreted Pyle's narrow upset victory as the first major step toward transforming historically Democratic Arizona into a legitimate two party state.<sup>100</sup>

The following year Goldwater won reelection to the Phoenix City Council. After having successfully "driven crime underground" and "balanced the city budget," he concluded that Arizona's Republicans needed to mount an aggressive campaign for the United States Senate against the entrenched Democratic incumbent, Ernest W. McFarland.<sup>101</sup> In 1952 Goldwater

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 114-15.

<sup>100</sup>For additional information on J. Howard Pyle see, John L. Myers, ed., The Arizona Governors 1912-1990 (Phoenix, AZ, 1989), 86-97.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 114. McFarland had served in the Senate since 1940 and was elected Majority Leader in 1951. For additional information see MAC, The Autobiography of Ernest W. McFarland (New York, 1979).

announced his candidacy and embarked on a "spur-of-the-moment, understaffed operation."<sup>102</sup> Concerned about her husband's entrance into national politics, Peggy Goldwater cautioned that he was "too direct and candid to be successful in politics" and that he would "get hurt and disillusioned with the endless promises and compromises needed to survive."<sup>103</sup> But Councilman Goldwater was determined to become a U.S. senator, and he eagerly began his crusade against the Democratic Party and the burgeoning federal government.

On the campaign trail the senatorial candidate declared that he was "fed up" with Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, "the ballooning federal government," and Harry Truman's "no-win policy in Korea." Goldwater's 1952 campaign exhibited the style and many of the issues that would characterize his bid for the presidency twelve years later. He called for stronger states' rights, a balanced budget, and a "better-directed" military force to oppose international communism.<sup>104</sup> He demanded that McFarland "accept his share of the responsibility" for the thousands of American troops who had been killed, wounded, or captured in Korea.<sup>105</sup>

Late in the campaign while in Prescott, Goldwater was urged by his

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<sup>102</sup>Stephen C. Shadegg, What Happened to Goldwater? The Inside Story of the 1964 Republican Campaign, (New York, 1965), 18.

<sup>103</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 121.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 120, 123.

<sup>105</sup>Richard H. Rovere, The Goldwater Caper (New York, 1965), 30.

manager, Steve C. Shadegg, to read his speech in order to avoid any "spontaneous one-liners" that could be negatively portrayed by the media. Goldwater said that he used one-liners because they "seemed to get us more publicity."<sup>106</sup> Years later this natural tendency would haunt him as a presidential candidate, but in 1952 Goldwater's political timing was exquisite since his bid for the Senate coincided with the presidential campaign of Dwight D. Eisenhower. In November, Eisenhower swept into the White House, and in a surprise outcome Goldwater became only the second Republican senator elected from Arizona since its admission to the Union in 1912. Ike had defeated Adlai Stevenson in Arizona by 43,000 votes, while Goldwater, with the help of more than fifty-thousand registered Democrats, won by the narrow margin of 7,000 votes.<sup>107</sup>

As a forty-four-year-old freshman senator, the Arizonan aspired to a seat on either the Interior or the Armed Services Committee, but Senate Republican leader Robert A. Taft instead appointed him to the Labor and Public Welfare Committee and to the Commerce and Banking Committee. Taft believed that Goldwater's business experience would enhance Republican influence in both legislative bodies. These appointments allowed the freshman senator input on important domestic legislation such as federal aid to education, minimum wage rates, and public welfare expenditures. As a member of the Labor Committee,

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<sup>106</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 122-23.

<sup>107</sup>Bell, Mr. Conservative, 61. Goldwater's defeat of McFarland led to election of Texas Senator Lyndon B. Johnson as Democratic Senate Minority Leader in 1953.

Goldwater became a vocal critic of allegedly corrupt union labor leaders. In Arizona, as a tacit supporter of Taft-Hartley, he had helped champion right-to-work legislation, and he steadfastly opposed compulsory political contributions by union workers. His appointment to the Labor Committee outraged powerful labor leaders such as Walter P. Reuther of the United Auto Workers and James R. Hoffa of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.<sup>108</sup>

As an adjunct to his seat on Labor, Goldwater was named to the Select Committee To Investigate Improper Activities in Labor/Management Relations, also known as the McClellan Rackets Committee. The subcommittee's attempts to expose union corruption prompted national media attention, including live television coverage. Fellow senator John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert, acting as the group's chief counsel, waged a "merciless" fight against Hoffa.<sup>109</sup> Meanwhile, Goldwater and other senators directed their efforts at Reuther. Their battles made national headlines for a year, and the outspoken Arizonan received more than 15,000 letters from rank and file union members complaining about corruption. The Senate investigations frequently became emotional and occasionally personal. Reuther once told reporters that Goldwater was a "political hypocrite and a moral coward."<sup>110</sup> The senator responded by challenging the union leader to a televised debate and

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<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 117-37.

<sup>109</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 128.

<sup>110</sup>Bell, Mr. Conservative, 120.



proclaimed that Reuther was "the most dangerous man in the world."<sup>111</sup>

During this period, Goldwater established a genuine friendship with the junior senator from Massachusetts, a relationship that continued throughout Kennedy's final days in the White House.

Goldwater also formed a relationship with fellow Republican committee member Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin. As a staunch anti-communist, the Arizona senator naturally aligned himself with the crusading McCarthy. Although Goldwater "often winced at...[McCarthy's] excesses and his indiscriminate charges of traitorous behavior," he remained loyal to McCarthy to the end, even pleading with him to sign a letter of apology to avoid censure in 1954.<sup>112</sup> Goldwater criticized those Republicans who advocated censure, which the Arizonan viewed as a triumph for communism.

In 1955, with only two years experience in the Senate, Goldwater's GOP peers appointed him chairman of the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee, since, as he said, "no one wanted the job." His primary responsibility was to assist Republican senatorial candidates in their election campaigns. Goldwater called it "a grueling, unrewarding, unglamorous job," but campaigning for other Republicans across the nation enabled him to espouse his conservative ideology.<sup>113</sup> As with his initial disappointment when

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<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>112</sup>Smith, The Goldwaters, 205.

<sup>113</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 143-44.

named to the labor and banking committees, the Senate campaign post unexpectedly enhanced Goldwater's political career. For two years he crisscrossed the country giving hundreds of speeches on the virtues of Republican conservatism covering both domestic and international affairs. The Arizonan criticized federal bureaucracy and the expanding national debt and denounced massive foreign aid programs, particularly those benefitting nations within the Soviet sphere of influence. Goldwater could hardly have planned a more advantageous first term in the Senate. As a result of his varied committee appointments he participated in the development of important domestic legislation and gained national prominence within the Republican Party.<sup>114</sup>

Goldwater's activities on the Senate labor committees appeared aggressive and independent, but it was his disagreements with President Eisenhower that cast him as a maverick and a renegade. The freshman senator voted against the President's nomination of Charles Bohlen as Ambassador to the Soviet Union and voted for the Bricker amendment, which was designed to curtail the Executive's authority in foreign affairs. His public criticisms of the administration were politically risky, as Ike remained extremely popular with voters throughout his tenure. One of Goldwater's earliest differences with the President involved the appointment of California governor Earl Warren as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The senator considered Warren too liberal, asserting "I can forget the argument that California and Arizona have over

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<sup>114</sup>Wood and Smith, Barry Goldwater, 116.

water. I can forget that Earl Warren hasn't practiced law for twenty-five years. But I can't forget that as governor he always recommended programs of the welfare state variety."<sup>115</sup> Goldwater's criticism of certain planks in the 1957 Civil Rights Act and his call for the resignation of presidential advisor Sherman Adams also infuriated Eisenhower. But the senator's most notorious disagreement with the administration concerned the President's 1957 \$71.8 billion budget proposal, the largest in peacetime history. In April 1957 from the Senate floor, the Arizonan proclaimed that the budget "not only shocks me, but it weakens my faith in the...administration. What is bad under the leadership of one party cannot possibly be good under the leadership of the other."<sup>116</sup> Goldwater later characterized Ike's budget proposal as a "Dime store New Deal."<sup>117</sup>

Throughout his first term in the Senate the maverick senator had honored his campaign pledge to provide "straight talk" for his constituents, and without the support of his popular president, Goldwater ran for reelection in 1958. Former Senator Ernest W. McFarland, once again provided the opposition. McFarland, who had remained a viable political force in Arizona by ousting Howard Pyle as governor in 1956, was favored in the polls throughout most of the election. Goldwater mounted an aggressive and expensive reelection

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<sup>115</sup>Bell, Mr. Conservative, 144, 140.

<sup>116</sup>Congressional Record, April 8, 1957, 85th Congress, 1st Session, p. 5259.

<sup>117</sup>Wood and Smith, Barry Goldwater, 114.

campaign. Earlier that year, the United Auto Workers union had announced that its chief political objective in 1958 was to ensure the defeat of Arizona's Republican senator. Goldwater and his campaign manager, Stephen C. Shadegg, immediately recognized the union's pronouncement as a "political situation demanding exploitation."<sup>118</sup> Capitalizing on his image as a foe of union corruption, Goldwater successfully linked the Democratic Party and Governor McFarland to the allegedly corrupt Walter Reuther and the UAW. Biographer Jack Bell claimed that the senator purposely avoided debate on specific issues during the campaign and instead chose to "flail the phantom figure of Walter Reuther...and to batter 'socialism'."<sup>119</sup> Goldwater reminded older constituents of his support for increased social security benefits and the general electorate of his successful battles for a balanced budget. He also clung to his senatorial record as an opponent of "the Super-State" and extolled his independence from "me-too" Republicanism.<sup>120</sup>

Goldwater also utilized foreign affairs in his reelection bid, comparing six years of accomplishments under Eisenhower's leadership to the scandals and uncertain policies of the Truman administration. He asked his audiences to recall that Democratic leadership had led to the communization of Eastern Europe and China and to the death of American troops in Korea. In contrast, he

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<sup>118</sup>Shadegg, What Happened to Goldwater, 19.

<sup>119</sup>Bell, Mr. Conservative, 64.

<sup>120</sup>Shadegg, What Happened to Goldwater, 20.

claimed that the GOP had rebuilt the nation's defense forces with the Strategic Air Command's jet bombers and the Navy's new fleet of nuclear submarines. At the same time, he boasted of his strident opposition to foreign aid for communist or neutral governments, and even of his reluctance to aid the French in their war against communist insurgents in Southeast Asia unless France made "satisfactory assurances" that it would "free" Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.<sup>121</sup>

The well organized and highly publicized Goldwater campaign attracted national media attention and substantial contributions from wealthy conservatives including Texas oil man H.L. Hunt and Hollywood mogul Cecil B. DeMille. As in the 1952 campaign, the Elect Goldwater Committee outspent its opposition by nearly two to one and with the assistance of more than 80,000 Arizona Democrats, Goldwater's margin of victory in 1958 increased from 7,000 to 35,000 votes. Stephen Shadegg later characterized the election as the major "turning point" in senator's political career.<sup>122</sup> Goldwater's increased margin of victory in an overwhelmingly Democratic state had demonstrated his personal appeal to voters. His success could no longer be dismissed as a product of Eisenhower's coattails.

Upon his triumphant return to Washington, Goldwater enjoyed new prominence as the ranking minority member on the labor committees and

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<sup>121</sup>Rovere, The Goldwater Caper, 29.

<sup>122</sup>Shadegg, What Happened to Goldwater, 18.

moved from sixth to third position on Interior and Insular Affairs. He quickly reestablished his maverick credentials in April 1959 by casting the sole dissenting vote in the Senate against the Kennedy-Ervin labor reform bill. Kennedy promptly remarked that it was "obvious that Senator Goldwater would be satisfied with no bill that did not destroy the organized trade union movement in the United States."<sup>123</sup> Eisenhower's investigation into Goldwater's claims that the bill was largely ineffective against union corruption and secondary boycotts resulted in a televised presidential speech that denounced the measure as inadequate. The Senate later reversed its approval of the Kennedy-Ervin bill, and in September 1959 an amended House bill, Landrum-Griffin, emerged from conference as law. According to Shadegg, "Every knowledgeable politician in America recognized that Barry Goldwater was the one man responsible for this legislative turnabout."<sup>124</sup>

After considerable prodding by fellow conservatives, Goldwater accepted reappointment as chairman of the Senatorial Campaign Committee following a two-year layoff. In his absence the Republicans had lost thirteen Senate seats, due primarily to the 1958 recession and the party's advocacy of right-to-work legislation. Just as Goldwater's intensive campaigning for Howard Pyle in 1952 had become a self-promoting affair, his relentless efforts as reelection chairman had begun to transform him into a popular national figure. His speeches

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<sup>123</sup>Theodore C. Sorensen, Kennedy (New York, 1965), 54.

<sup>124</sup>Shadegg, What Happened to Goldwater, 22.

remained familiar. He denounced large federal government and endorsed a powerful military to resist the spread of communism. The senator was described as a new party leader who had come "out of the West like a refreshing breeze. His language was rough...candor shocking...[and] sincerity beyond reproach. He was the Viceroy independent thinker, the Marlboro man."<sup>125</sup>

After he delivered a rousing speech at the Western Republican Conference in November 1959, the Los Angeles Times requested that the senator contribute a tri-weekly newspaper column. Goldwater accepted the offer and within two years the column, entitled "How Do You Stand, Sir?," had been syndicated to 148 newspapers. Persuaded by fellow Republicans to write a book "setting forth in simple terms the basic conservative political philosophy," Goldwater published The Conscience Of A Conservative with the assistance of Notre Dame law professor Dean Clarence and National Review editor L. Brent Bozell in the spring of 1960.<sup>126</sup> Based largely on his campaign stump speeches, the 123 page work outlined basic conservative principles and their relation to domestic and international affairs. According to Goldwater, this "unpretentious book" became a "symbol of a new political consciousness" and a "rallying cry of the right against three decades of Franklin D. Roosevelt and

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<sup>125</sup>Ripon Society, From Disaster to Distinction: A Republican Rebirth (New York, 1966), 14.

<sup>126</sup>Shadegg, What Happened to Goldwater, 32.

the liberal agenda."<sup>127</sup> With only 10,000 copies published during the first printing, no one could have imagined that sales would eventually exceed four million.

The book provided a succinct compilation of the senator's political views and served as a landmark contribution to the "Goldwater image." The senator criticized big government as a threat to the freedom of individual citizens. His narrow interpretation of the tenth amendment, "a prohibitory rule of law" that recognized the states' jurisdiction in areas not specifically addressed in the Constitution, led him to oppose federal spending programs for education, public housing, and agriculture subsidies.<sup>128</sup> The tenth amendment reads in part: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."<sup>129</sup> Consequently, Goldwater believed that many federal spending programs were unconstitutional and that state and local governments working with private citizens' groups should assume responsibility for various services.

The last third of the book, under the heading "The Soviet Menace," echoed Goldwater's first comprehensive foreign policy address on the Senate floor given on March 15, 1960. He proclaimed that the United States was in "imminent danger" from communism and called for outright "victory" in the

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<sup>127</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 152.

<sup>128</sup>Barry M. Goldwater, Conscience of a Conservative (Shepherdsville, KY, 1960), 28.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid.



Cold War. He prescribed military superiority and an aggressive foreign policy to prevent the establishment of a "universal Communist Empire." Goldwater favored withdrawing diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union and demanded a reevaluation of U.S. participation in the United Nations. The senator sharply criticized U.S. foreign aid, particularly aid to communist countries like Poland and Yugoslavia and to non-aligned countries such as India and Indonesia. He believed that the United States had no right or obligation to "promote the economic and social welfare of foreign peoples"; however, he advocated military and technical aid to "friendly" anti-communist countries such as South Vietnam. Goldwater also argued for the resumption of nuclear testing, explaining that "tests are needed to develop tactical nuclear weapons for possible use in limited wars." In the book's conclusion, Goldwater acknowledged that his recommendations were "hard counsel" but that "war may be the price of freedom."<sup>130</sup>

The popularity of his book and newspaper column helped to complete the transformation of Goldwater's reputation as a maverick senator from a sparsely populated state to that of a prominent national leader of the growing conservative movement. Arizona's junior senator capitalized on his new popularity by using his speaking tours to support the 1960 Republican presidential nomination of Richard M. Nixon, whom he deemed more conservative than the Vice President's rival, New York governor Nelson A.

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<sup>130</sup>Ibid., 87, 91, 95, 109, 122-23.

Rockefeller. In the spring of 1960, Goldwater's rising popularity was manifest at the GOP's South Carolina state convention where the Arizonan was the keynote speaker. The state's delegates responded so enthusiastically to his address that they voted to nominate Goldwater over Nixon for the presidency. The senator quickly informed Nixon of the circumstances and assured him that he fully backed the Vice President's candidacy.<sup>131</sup>

Nixon eventually won the Republican nomination but not before a late compromise with Rockefeller on the GOP platform.<sup>132</sup> He had agreed to emphasize a stronger defense policy and new planks favoring civil rights, federal aid to education and opposing right-to-work legislation. Conservatives felt betrayed by the platform's new language and Nixon's reversal on the labor issue particularly upset Goldwater who wrote in his diary, "The man is a two-fisted, four-square liar." The senator characterized Nixon's action as "appeasement" of the party's liberal wing and referred to the meeting as "an American Munich."<sup>133</sup> The Nixon-Rockefeller pact solidified the right wing at the 1960 Republican convention and revitalized support for a Goldwater presidential nomination. South Carolina continued to pledge its votes in favor of the senator; and Texas threatened to bolt Nixon. In an effort to promote party unity, Goldwater asked all delegates to relinquish their support for his

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<sup>131</sup>Shadegg, What Happened To Goldwater, 37.

<sup>132</sup>Herbert S. Parmet, Richard Nixon And His America (Boston, 1990), 386-89.

<sup>133</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 150, 256.

candidacy. Nonetheless, the South Carolina delegation voted for Goldwater, which gave the senator the opportunity to address the convention. He took the stage and officially withdrew his nomination and repeated his call for a unified party, but the senator also prodded Republican conservatives to "get to work if we want to take this party back—I think we can."<sup>134</sup> Many observers, including Stephen Shadegg, have concluded that the crowd's enthusiastic reaction to Goldwater's speech ignited the movement for his presidential nomination in 1964. Regardless, Goldwater delivered more than one-hundred campaign speeches for the Republican ticket. He frequently relayed strategy recommendations to the Nixon campaign staff, often pleading for the candidate to take a hawkish stand on foreign policy. On October 27, 1960, the Arizonan sent a telegram to the nominee stating, "They want to hear a tough attitude toward Russia - - an attitude that might run the risk of war but which would guarantee us a fight for our freedom instead of the slow dribbling away such as the Democrats have been doing at Versailles, Potsdam, Yalta, Tehran, and Korea."<sup>135</sup> When the Republicans narrowly lost to John F. Kennedy in November, Goldwater blamed Nixon's reluctance to fully involve President Eisenhower in the campaign and the Vice President's failure to rally conservative voters.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>David W. Reinhard, The Republican Right Since 1945 (Lexington, KY, 1983), 155.

<sup>135</sup>Bell, Mr. Conservative, 155.

<sup>136</sup>Barry M. Goldwater, With No Apologies (New York, 1978), 125-26.

Shortly after the election, Goldwater's second term as chairman of the Senatorial Campaign Committee expired. Despite the fact that all GOP senators had successfully run for reelection in 1960, several liberal committee members including Senator Jacob K. Javits of New York opposed his reappointment on ideological grounds. Goldwater received unexpected support from Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine. While acknowledging a "substantial divergence" in their views, Smith favored his reappointment because he had demonstrated "an ability and a determination to do everything he could to get every Republican nominee elected regardless of whether he agreed or disagreed with the views of the individual candidate."<sup>137</sup> With Smith's endorsement, Goldwater undertook his third, two-year term as chairman.

Due largely to his committee assignments, Goldwater's first eight years in the Senate had focused primarily on the nation's domestic agenda. A noticeable shift towards foreign affairs began a week after the 1960 elections when the senator accepted an invitation to deliver a foreign policy speech at the Air War College in Montgomery, Alabama. The speech provided the basis for his subsequent positions on foreign affairs.<sup>138</sup> Goldwater stated that "where conflicts arise, they must always be resolved in favor of achieving the indispensable condition for a tolerable world - - the absence of Soviet

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<sup>137</sup>Bell, Mr. Conservative, 173.

<sup>138</sup>The speech is reprinted as an appendix to Stephen Shadegg's What Happened to Goldwater (New York, 1965).

Communist power."<sup>139</sup> He proclaimed the global pursuit of freedom, justice, peace, and prosperity the objects of U.S. foreign policy, but declared them secondary to containing the Soviet Union:

Peace is a worthy objective. But if we must choose between peace and keeping the Communists out of Berlin, then we must fight. Freedom...is a worthy objective. But if granting self-determination to the Algerian rebels entails sweeping that area into the Soviet orbit, then Algerian freedom must be postponed. Justice is a worthy objective, but if justice for the Bantus entails driving the government of the Union of South Africa away from the West, then the Bantus must be prepared to carry their identification cards yet awhile longer. Prosperity is a worthy objective, but if providing higher standards of living gets in the way of producing sufficient guns to resist communist aggression, then material sacrifices and denials will have to be made.<sup>140</sup>

Goldwater advocated the anti-communist containment strategy designed by Truman and the brinkmanship tactics employed by Eisenhower, and he rejected calls for disarmament negotiations as counterproductive to a "peace through strength" policy. The senator warned the military officers that, "Free institutions and free governments are being challenged by an implacable foe dedicated to their destruction. If we renounce in advance the right to resist Communist aggression with military strength, we have in effect lost the battle and are merely waiting to arrange the terms of surrender."<sup>141</sup> Goldwater attacked President-elect Kennedy for substantiating inaccurate charges of a decline in U.S. missile superiority and for placing too much importance on international perceptions of American prestige. He concluded with a call for the removal of the Castro regime and moderate praise for the United Nations,

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<sup>139</sup>Shadegg, What Happened to Goldwater, 42.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 40, 42.

but warned that U.S. foreign policy should never be subordinated to the world organization.

Goldwater's growing influence in the conservative wing of the GOP was obvious in John G. Tower's election to Senate in the spring of 1961. The candidate had rejected Nixon's offer to campaign on his behalf in favor of Goldwater's direct endorsement. Tower, a young conservative, filled the seat vacated by Lyndon Johnson who had become vice president. The first Republican senator elected from Texas since Reconstruction, Tower's upset victory not only boosted Goldwater's national influence but demonstrated the increasing popularity of the conservative movement. Democratic Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin commented that the Arizonan had developed a "most surprising personal following in my own state" and that "letters praising Goldwater come to me almost as frequently as letters in praise of Kennedy."<sup>142</sup>

Goldwater's importance was also evident on April 15, 1961, when President Kennedy called him to the White House for counsel on the proposed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Goldwater sensed Kennedy's reluctance to order U.S. air cover during the operation and was shocked that the President might "abandon" the exiled Cubans. He advised the President to "do whatever is necessary" to assure a successful invasion. When Goldwater left the White House, he was certain that Kennedy would order U.S. forces to assist in the

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<sup>142</sup>Bell, Mr. Conservative, 198.

invasion, but the American military did not intervene and the Cuban exiles were easily repelled. The Cuban debacle cast a shadow over the new administration's ability to conduct foreign affairs.<sup>143</sup> Goldwater and many others, including former President Eisenhower, were sure that Kennedy's inaction would be interpreted by the Soviets as a sign of weakness.<sup>144</sup> The senator later insisted that during this April meeting he, not Kennedy, had possessed the "toughness of mind and will to lead the country."<sup>145</sup>

Attempting to capitalize on the administration's vulnerability in international affairs, Goldwater freely criticized the direction of U.S. foreign policy from his new position on the Senate Armed Services Committee. His second major book Why Not Victory? was devoted exclusively to foreign policy and expanded on the ideas presented at the Air War College. Goldwater wrote:

I am not calling for return to the naked power of politics of the nineteenth century. I am not asking that we declare hot war on Russia or turn a deaf ear to the pleas of help from destitute nations. I am willing to be as modern as anyone as long as modernism does not constitute a debasing of our traditional values. But if to be modern I must accede to policies that would turn the foreign affairs of the United States over to the United Nations, disarm our great military machine, welcome Red China into the Committee of Nations, give away our food and technical skills to the so-called neutralist nations, and get nothing in return...if this is what is meant, then indeed I am not modern and never want to be.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup>For a thorough analysis of Kennedy's foreign policy, including the Bay of Pigs invasion, see Thomas G. Paterson, ed., Kennedy's Quest For Victory: American Foreign Policy 1961-1963 (New York, 1989).

<sup>144</sup>Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: The President, (New York, 1984), II:637-641.

<sup>145</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 172-73.

<sup>146</sup>Barry M. Goldwater, Why Not Victory? A Fresh Look at American Foreign Policy (New York, 1962), 17.

Conservatives praised the book. The Wall Street Journal commented that, "Goldwater attacks the heart of various world problems, and most of the time his logic is irrefutable."<sup>147</sup> The Saturday Review printed contrasting reviews from two political analysts. Raymond Moley argued that the senator was an "authentic statesman" and that the book contained nothing fanatical; rather "It is a reasoned analysis of the failures of foreign policy under the party that he opposes." Moley's counterpart, Walter Johnson, assailed Goldwater for distorting the positions of his opponents and for reveling in the "fundamentalist-revivalistic technique of using emotion-laden words." He concluded that Goldwater was an "Un-Modern Republican" with "uncomplicated" views on foreign policy.<sup>148</sup> The New York Times succinctly concluded that Why Not Victory contained "the purest of Goldwaterism" that offered "sweet music" to Goldwater supporters, although his opponents were likely to "cry horror."<sup>149</sup> The book's extensive militant language contributed to the senator's emerging image as a warmonger. He warned that "Time is running out" in the war against communism:

Providence has imposed upon us the task of leading the free world's fight to stay free. We must be ready to fight all sorts of wars—brush fires as well as nuclear. We need weapons for both limited and the unlimited war. We must—unfortunately—continue to build bigger weapons until the Communist menace has subsided. We must go on the offensive....proclaim victory as our aim and then press boldly and unremittingly on all fronts. Our job, first and foremost, is to persuade the enemy that we would rather follow the world to Kingdom Come than consign it

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<sup>147</sup>Wall Street Journal, April 23, 1962.

<sup>148</sup>Saturday Review, July 7, 1962, 24-25.

<sup>149</sup>New York Times, April 29, 1962.



to Hell under communism.<sup>150</sup>

In the summer of 1961, Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, began to challenge Goldwater's views on foreign affairs in a series of speeches from the Senate floor: "voices are saying...that the United States is the strongest country in the world, and should not hesitate to commit its strength to the active defense of its policies anywhere outside the Communist empire. This is dangerous doctrine."<sup>151</sup> Fulbright supported peaceful co-existence in the Cold War, a policy that relied on negotiation and compromise with the Soviets.<sup>152</sup> To the Arizonan, peaceful co-existence was the antithesis of conservative foreign policy. He described policy under Kennedy and Fulbright as aimless and timid and called for new aggressive action to defeat the expanding communist menace. World peace, he maintained, was obtainable only through demonstrative power. Fulbright chided Goldwater and called upon him to explain the meaning of "total victory" in the Cold War and asked how it could be achieved "in this age of ideological conflict and nuclear weapons."<sup>153</sup>

Goldwater defined "victory" in Why Not Victory?:

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<sup>150</sup>Goldwater, Why Not Victory?, 43, 122, 143, 157, 159, 161.

<sup>151</sup>Congressional Record, June 29, 1961, 87th Congress, 2nd Session, p.11702. For a collection of early Fulbright speeches see, Karl E. Meyer, ed., Fulbright of Arkansas: The Public Positions of a Private Thinker (Washington D.C., 1963).

<sup>152</sup>For a more thorough analysis see J. William Fulbright's The Arrogance of Power (New York, 1966), Eugene Brown's J. William Fulbright: Advice and Dissent (Iowa City, IA, 1985), and Haynes Johnson and Bernard M. Gwertzman's Fulbright: The Dissenter (Garden City, NY, 1968).

<sup>153</sup>Congressional Record, July 24, 1961, 87th Congress, 2nd Session, p.13246.

If there is doubt as to what victory in the Communist War means, let me say that it means the opposite of defeat; it means freedom instead of slavery; it means the right of every man to worship God; of nations to determine their own destiny free of force and coercion. Victory in the Communist War means the sum total of all the hopes of free men throughout the world. It means human dignity, freedom of choice, the right to work. And it means peace with honor for men who prize liberty and do not fear death. Those who argue against any use of strength, against any military risk, against any unilateral action fail to understand that political victory in the Communist War is the only way to avoid a strictly military solution of the East-West crisis."<sup>154</sup>

Goldwater's call for direct resistance to communist expansion was realized in October 1962. In a televised address, President Kennedy announced a military blockade of Cuba and demanded the immediate removal of Soviet nuclear missiles from the island.<sup>155</sup> Nearly two-hundred American ships and aircraft, some armed with nuclear weapons, were deployed to the Caribbean. The crisis subsided six tense days later when the Soviets agreed to remove the missiles and the U.S. promised not to invade Cuba. Despite its favorable resolution, the brinkmanship of the Cuban missile crisis frightened many Americans, a consequence that did not curtail Goldwater's militant rhetoric. Kennedy's leadership during the Cuban crisis galvanized public support for his administration and the Bay of Pigs fiasco seemed forgotten. The Democrats were rewarded with a four seat gain in the November 1962 mid-term elections which forced the Republicans to refocus their attention on regaining the White House in 1964.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup>Goldwater, Why Not Victory, 153-54.

<sup>155</sup>For recent scholarship on the Cuban missile crisis see, James A. Nathan, ed., The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited (New York, 1992).

<sup>156</sup> Harold Faber, ed., The New York Times Election Handbook 1964 (New York, 1964) 36-39.

According to a January 1963 Gallup Poll, half of the nation's Republican and independent voters favored Nelson Rockefeller as the 1964 GOP presidential nominee. Former Vice President Nixon's loss to Pat Brown in the 1962 California gubernatorial race had severely weakened support for his renomination. Rockefeller maneuvered to neutralize opposition to his nomination within the party.<sup>157</sup> As the leader of the Republican Party's minority conservative wing, Goldwater met with Governor Rockefeller on several occasions to discuss "party and policy problems." By the spring of 1963, Goldwater concluded that the governor "had moved to the right," and to the surprise of many, he announced a preference for Rockefeller over two other potential nominees, Nixon and political newcomer Governor George Romney of Michigan.<sup>158</sup>

Confidence in Rockefeller's leadership declined sharply in May 1963, when the governor's recent divorce and subsequent remarriage became public. News coverage of the marriage and his new wife's supposed abandonment of her children from her previous marriage generated tremendous negative mail. Rockefeller's popularity in the presidential polls plummeted, while support for Goldwater and Romney soared. A published report detailing a survey of 382 Republican leaders indicated that "the Goldwater tide is rising high" and that

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<sup>157</sup>Michael Kramer and Sam Roberts, "I Never Wanted To Be Vice President Of Anything!" An Investigative Biography of Nelson Rockefeller (New York, 1976), 266-71.

<sup>158</sup>Goldwater and Casserly Goldwater, 176-77.

he was "far out in front" of all other potential candidates.<sup>159</sup> Rumors circulated that Rockefeller blamed Goldwater for the hate mail received from right wing conservative groups. Their newfound friendship disintegrated as quickly as it had formed. Throughout the summer of 1963, Rockefeller condemned right wing extremists for attempting to take over the Republican Party and threatened not to support a Goldwater presidential bid if the senator were captured by the "radical right."<sup>160</sup>

A "Draft Goldwater Committee" had been in full operation for nearly two years. The independent organization led by F. Clifton White, a Republican campaign organizer from New York, had worked nationally to recruit conservative delegates at all levels of state and local government. On July 4, 1963, the committee organized a successful political rally of more than 8,000 supporters at the District of Columbia Stadium without the participation or endorsement of its candidate. The Nation described the event as "every Goldwater fan's dream of a Republican national convention" complete with campaign placards that read "DON'T TARRY - GO BARRY" and "JFK - WE WILL BARRY YOU."<sup>161</sup> Senator John Tower and a cast of Hollywood celebrities predicted a Goldwater presidential victory before an enthusiastic crowd. As a result of his untiring devotion to the GOP, the Arizonan benefitted

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<sup>159</sup>U.S. News & World Report, July 15, 1963, 41-43.

<sup>160</sup>Goldwater and Casserly Goldwater, 182.

<sup>161</sup>Nation, July 27, 1963, 48.

from widespread support among party officials at the county and state levels and nationally from fellow senators Norris Cotton of New Hampshire, Carl Curtis of Nebraska, Karl Mundt of South Dakota, and congressmen Robert Dole of Kansas, Melvin Laird of Wisconsin, and Robert Michel of Illinois. Although, Goldwater had distanced himself from the organized effort and delayed public announcement of his candidacy, he was outraged at Rockefeller's repeated attacks and grew increasingly anxious to win the Republican nomination and to challenge his friend and political rival, Jack Kennedy. He believed that Kennedy's vacillation in foreign affairs and support for "worn-out domestic spending programs" made him vulnerable.<sup>162</sup>

During early October, Kennedy toured several western states and began what the press interpreted as a series of pre-election campaign speeches. According to the National Review, the public's reaction to Kennedy's speeches confirmed the appeal of the "peace" issue and predicted that peace would be "the #1 hot item" in his 1964 reelection campaign. The magazine further forecast that the any GOP presidential nominee would "have to fight off the accusation, 'Warmonger!'"<sup>163</sup> A week later a preliminary presidential election poll indicated that Kennedy would command 55 percent of the vote compared to 39 percent for Goldwater, with 6 percent undecided. But Goldwater's personal popularity was reported at 45 percent and climbing; and a November

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<sup>162</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 175.

<sup>163</sup>National Review, October 22, 1963, 336.

2, 1963, Associated Press poll of GOP state and county chairmen displayed solid support for the senator's nomination. By contrast, Kennedy's national approval rating had slipped from 70 percent in 1962 to its all time low of 59 percent.<sup>164</sup> The President believed that Texas, where his approval rating was a dismal 38 percent, was crucial to his reelection in 1964 and the state became an important stop on his Western tour.<sup>165</sup> Look magazine projected that Goldwater could actually defeat Kennedy.<sup>166</sup> Conservative Republicans concluded that even if outright victory were not probable in 1964, the contest would at least be close and enable the right wing to capture control of their party.

Goldwater had planned to publicly announce his candidacy at the end of November, but a sniper's bullet intervened in Dallas on November 22. The Kennedy assassination stunned the nation and reversed Goldwater's decision to run for president. He told friends that the thought of running against Vice President Johnson was "abhorrent." Goldwater believed that there could be no battles over issues with Johnson, who was "a dirty fighter" and a "master of manipulation." But the groundswell for a Goldwater candidacy that had begun at the 1960 GOP convention was overpowering, and under significant pressure

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<sup>164</sup> George H. Gallop, The Gallop Poll: Public Opinion, 1935-1971, vol. 3, 1959-1971 (New York, 1972), 1847, 1850.

<sup>165</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson, The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the President, 1963-1969 (New York, 1971), 6.

<sup>166</sup> Look, October 8, 1963, 36-37.

from Senators Cotton, Curtis and other conservatives, Goldwater relented, predicting that it would be "an all-out bitter battle."<sup>167</sup>

In just twelve years Barry M. Goldwater had risen from an obscure Phoenix city councilman to a legitimate presidential candidate. His immediate success had resulted from a blend of candor, enthusiasm, conservative ideology, and political good fortune. His exhaustive campaigning against twenty years of Democratic leadership in domestic and foreign affairs surprised his overconfident opponent in 1952, and the coinciding election of Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower ensured Goldwater an upset victory. Once in the Senate the Arizonan took advantage of prime committee appointments, and his activities earned him a national reputation as a courageous, forthright, and independent legislator. His constituents indicated their approval by reelecting the maverick in 1958. During his second term, Goldwater emphasized the necessity of "victory" in the Cold War and continued his fight against large federal government. Gradually the Arizonan had emerged as the leader of the Republican Party's conservative wing. By the summer of 1963, Goldwater appeared a likely presidential nominee following the political misfortunes of the party's two more moderate leaders, Richard Nixon and Nelson Rockefeller.

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<sup>167</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 189, 191, 194.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **BAPTISM BY FIRE:**

#### **Goldwater And The Drive**

#### **For The 1964 Republican Nomination**

Before challenging Lyndon Johnson for the White House, Barry Goldwater first had to capture the Republican nomination. During his eleven years in the Senate, the Arizonan had established a reputation as the outspoken leader of the party's minority conservative wing. He had frequently confronted fellow Republicans, including President Dwight D. Eisenhower, on diverse domestic and foreign policy issues. Despite his independence, Goldwater had earned the respect and gratitude of many Republicans for his untiring efforts as chair of the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee. Still, senatorial gratitude was not equivalent to general support. As he entered the primary campaign, Goldwater remained the maverick leader of the GOP's minority faction, and the nomination was far from a foregone conclusion.

New York governor Nelson A. Rockefeller provided Goldwater's principal opposition. The wealthy and powerful governor represented the GOP's influential eastern establishment which had supported the Eisenhower administration and generally controlled the party's moderate wing. Rockefeller's



presidential ambitions had been well publicized since he mounted a minor challenge to Richard Nixon's nomination four years earlier. In 1964 the governor campaigned as the party's mainstream candidate who supported a strong national defense and moderate federal programs. Since the 1960 GOP convention, the conservatives had gradually begun to dominate much of the party's local and state machinery, and Goldwater's impressive grassroots following forced Rockefeller to attack the senator aggressively, characterizing him as a dangerous extremist whose presidency would lead to nuclear war.

Goldwater largely ignored Rockefeller's candidacy and chose to campaign against Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. Calling for victory in the Cold War, the senator also made foreign affairs a primary issue and denounced the defense policies of Democratic presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson. Rockefeller's negative campaign also helped to keep foreign affairs at the forefront of the primaries by seeking to capitalize on Goldwater's imprudent, "shoot-from-the-hip" manner. The relentless attacks on Goldwater proved so effective that the Democrats quickly recognized the Arizonan's vulnerabilities and quietly hoped for a Goldwater nomination.

On January 3, 1964, Barry Morris Goldwater, wearing blue jeans and an old shirt and leaning on crutches because of recent foot surgery, officially announced his candidacy for the GOP presidential nomination from his home in Phoenix, Arizona. The outspoken Republican promised to lead the nation in

a new direction by providing voters "a choice, not an echo."<sup>168</sup> Rather than being just another "Me Too" Republican, Goldwater pledged to offer policy alternatives distinct from those of rival GOP candidates and the Democratic Party. The Arizonan embarked on an intense campaign that would divide the Republicans so severely that the party was unable to mount a viable challenge for the presidency.

January polling data indicated that popular support for party leadership was generally divided among Goldwater, Rockefeller, Nixon and U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., and that none of the Republicans would run well against Lyndon Johnson in the general election. The absence of a predominant leader led to a rancorous fight over the 1964 GOP presidential nomination and for control of the party. Of the four leading Republicans, only Goldwater and Rockefeller formally announced their candidacies and actively campaigned for the nomination. Their first battles were waged during January and February in New Hampshire.<sup>169</sup>

The New Hampshire primary carried the pledge of fourteen convention delegates, but more importantly, the election would afford an early barometer of the party's ideological direction and help designate party leadership. Early polls comparing the two active candidates indicated an overwhelming Goldwater lead; however, his popularity dissipated primarily because of

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<sup>168</sup>Barry M. Goldwater and Jack Casserly, Goldwater (New York, 1988), 197.

<sup>169</sup>Theodore H. White, The Making Of The President 1964 (New York, 1965), 98-110.

campaign controversies regarding his position on social security and foreign affairs. In his opening press conference in Concord, Goldwater was asked to comment on his position regarding the social security system. He stated that the system was financially sound but that it could be improved by making the program voluntary. When asked about the Castro regime in Cuba, the senator said he would support another exile-led invasion of the island aided by U.S. air power. The following day the Concord Daily Monitor published the headline: "GOLDWATER SETS GOALS: END SOCIAL SECURITY, HIT CASTRO."<sup>170</sup>

The headline clearly distorted Goldwater's position, but his proclivity for off-the-cuff remarks rather than adhering to formulated policy statements made him susceptible to this type of misrepresentation. Furthermore, the senator's comments on Cuba only reinforced his image as a warmonger. Earlier, Goldwater had asserted that the NATO commander should have authority to use tactical nuclear weapons to repel a Soviet attack on Western Europe.<sup>171</sup> Such a policy, although largely unknown, had been implemented by the Eisenhower administration and had been continued by Kennedy and Johnson. Press representation of his position rankled voters because it suggested that Goldwater would arbitrarily transfer control of United States nuclear weapons to NATO field commanders. Journalists covering the Goldwater campaign pounced on this type of material; and as one Associated Press reporter

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<sup>170</sup>Robert D. Novak, The Agony Of The G.O.P., 1964 (New York, 1965), 310.

<sup>171</sup>Washington Post, October 25, 1963.

remarked, "This was great. All we had to do was keep hitting him with questions and then wait until he slipped and we had our headlines."<sup>172</sup>

Goldwater later accepted partial blame for these damaging incidents, acknowledging that he should have used "more precise language, qualifying what I said"; but he also faulted the press for careless and provocative reporting.<sup>173</sup> Aside from the mistakes resulting from the Arizonan's "imprecise frankness," his New Hampshire campaign was poorly executed. The "stop-in-every-snack-bar" handshaking expeditions overextended the candidate, whose proven strength had been making carefully honed speeches to larger groups.<sup>174</sup> The senator subsequently admitted that the New Hampshire primary served as a lesson in "how not to run a campaign."<sup>175</sup>

Comparatively, Rockefeller planned and conducted a more impressive campaign, and according to one reporter, the governor "worked harder...and had more fun than Goldwater."<sup>176</sup> He traversed the Granite State like a quintessential politician. Goldwater biographer Jack Bell described him as a "backslapper, an arm-around-the-shoulder and an all-smiles boy," who "tossed

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<sup>172</sup>Karl Hess, In A Cause That Will Triumph: The Goldwater Campaign and the Future of Conservatism (New York, 1967), 26.

<sup>173</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 204.

<sup>174</sup>Hess, In A Cause That Will Triumph, 27.

<sup>175</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 202.

<sup>176</sup>Charles McDowell, Jr., Campaign Fever: The National Folk Festival, from New Hampshire to November, 1964, (New York, 1965), 30.

off warmth like a New England stove."<sup>177</sup> Rockefeller successfully implemented a strategy designed to capitalize on the mounting "Goldwater image" as a reckless radical, who would cancel popular government programs and risk nuclear war. According to a campaign journalist, the governor wanted to "crystallize it, document it, light it dramatically, and develop it as the villain of the piece."<sup>178</sup> But for all of Goldwater's woes, Rockefeller failed to improve upon his own popularity with the electorate. Nearly 50 percent of New Hampshire's voters remained undecided, and the New York governor was dogged by the publicity surrounding his remarriage and the announcement of his new wife's pregnancy.<sup>179</sup>

According to a New York Times survey, foreign affairs not Rockefeller's personal life, had become the single most important issue to New Hampshire voters.<sup>180</sup> Goldwater, who had been promoted to Major General in the Air Force Reserve, was most responsible for bringing foreign policy to the forefront, and Rockefeller and the press stood poised to seize on any of his unguarded statements. The Arizonan proclaimed that the major objective of American foreign policy should be "the reduction of communist power."<sup>181</sup> In addition

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<sup>177</sup>Jack Bell, Mr. Conservative: Barry Goldwater (Garden City, NY, 1962), 300.

<sup>178</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 22.

<sup>179</sup>Novak, The Agony, 322.

<sup>180</sup>New York Times, March 8, 1964.

<sup>181</sup>Goldwater Campaign Speech, San Francisco, California, February 12, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume I, p.7, Barry M. Goldwater Collection, Arizona Historical Foundation,

to his stand on sharing control of nuclear weapons with NATO, Goldwater advocated the reinstitution of the Cuba blockade and the use of force against Castro, who had recently cut off the fresh water supply to the Guantanamo naval base.<sup>182</sup> The senator also reaffirmed his willingness to withdraw diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union, and he recommended that the United States leave the United Nations if the People's Republic of China were ever admitted. Regarding Vietnam, both candidates criticized the Johnson administration and U.S. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. for "indecisive" and "unclear" policies. The Arizonan claimed current Vietnam policy would lead to "disaster" and that the United States could not "ignore hard choices in Vietnam....[we must] either win or withdraw."<sup>183</sup> Goldwater regularly called for a return to the foreign policies of Eisenhower and Dulles, who had advocated "occasional brinkmanship" and the "proper use of force."<sup>184</sup>

Two days before the primary, the New York Times forecast a close election and indicated that rising fears over Goldwater's positions on foreign relations had benefitted a surging write-in campaign for New England favorite-son, Ambassador Lodge. The Times concluded that the senator's aggressiveness

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Tempe, Arizona.

<sup>182</sup>According to historian Walter LeFeber, President Johnson gave a "superb performance" when he developed an independent water supply for the installation and then later rejected a Castro offer to turn the water back on. See LeFeber, "Latin American Policy," in The Johnson Years, vol. I, ed. Robert A. Divine, (Lawrence, KS, 1987), 71.

<sup>183</sup>New York Times, February 21, 1964.

<sup>184</sup>*Ibid.*, February 4, 1964.

on foreign affairs "disturbs voters," and the paper quoted several New Hampshire residents describing the senator as "a hot head" and "a nut."<sup>185</sup> During the campaign's waning hours, Rockefeller stepped up his assault on Goldwater, characterizing his views on foreign affairs as an invitation to "world suicide" and the prospect of entrusting the country to him as "appalling."<sup>186</sup> Behind the scenes, the governor unsuccessfully urged the leaders of the Lodge organization to abandon their efforts.

On March 10, 1964, some 90,000 New Hampshire voters plodded through the snow to the voting booths and left political pundits astonished at the outcome. Without officially announcing his candidacy or leaving Saigon, write-in candidate Lodge with 33,000 votes soundly defeated both Goldwater with 20,700 votes and Rockefeller with 19,500 votes. Interpreted as a rejection of both Goldwater and Rockefeller, the New Hampshire results left the direction of the party uncertain. Most analysts agreed that despite Lodge's upset victory, his strong emergence in public opinion polls would prove temporary as he lacked a coordinated national campaign and had no significant support among state or county level Republican leaders. Observers further concluded that the GOP would be forced to seek alternative candidates. Richard Nixon's popularity among Republicans had remained fairly stable, and other frequently mentioned potential nominees included Michigan governor George Romney

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<sup>185</sup>Ibid., March 8, 1964.

<sup>186</sup>Ibid., March 9, 1964.

and Pennsylvania governor William Scranton. Goldwater's defeat in New Hampshire seemed to confirm columnist Joseph Alsop's contention that "No serious Republican, even the most Neanderthal type, any longer takes Goldwater seriously."<sup>187</sup> The Goldwater staff regrouped in Washington, promoting Cliff White to co-director and enhancing Karl Hess' role as lead speech writer and general advisor to the campaign. Reassessing the New Hampshire election during a television interview, the Arizonan concluded bluntly, "I goofed."<sup>188</sup>

The next major primary elections were in Oregon and California. Unlike New Hampshire, the May Oregon ballot included the names of all Republican contenders regardless of whether they were announced candidates. The slate listed Lodge, Nixon, Goldwater, Rockefeller, Scranton and Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine. Senator Smith had begun a limited campaign designed to demonstrate that it was plausible for a woman to run for the presidency. Despite continued popularity in the polls, Lodge denied he was a candidate. The Ambassador was soon visited in Vietnam by another undeclared candidate, Richard Nixon. The former vice president was reportedly on a world tour as legal counsel for the Pepsi-Cola Company; however, he managed to engage the press in regular news conferences concerning American politics. Governor Scranton publicly remained non-committal. Once again only Goldwater and

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<sup>187</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 30.

<sup>188</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 205.



Rockefeller overtly solicited convention delegate support.<sup>189</sup>

Ambassador Lodge's New Hampshire victory and surge in opinion polls expanded the visibility and importance of U.S. policy in Vietnam. While campaigning in northern California in March, Goldwater predicted that U.S. intervention in Vietnam would constitute a "battalion sized conflict" that required a clearly stated purpose.<sup>190</sup> He demanded that Lodge return stateside and report to Congress on the deteriorating conditions in South Vietnam. The Arizona senator invoked Eisenhower's domino theory, proclaiming that all of Southeast Asia would be lost to communism if Vietnam were not adequately supported and suggested that direct attacks on North Vietnam "might be advisable."<sup>191</sup> In a televised address Goldwater insisted that U.S. military intervention in Southeast Asia had resulted from President Johnson's indecisive foreign policy leadership and told voters that "we can and we should end the fighting in Viet Nam by taking the strong, affirmative action that would do just that."<sup>192</sup> Rockefeller called for Lodge's resignation and for an explanation of the failing U.S. policies in Vietnam. He also assailed Goldwater's pledge for victory in Vietnam as "irresponsible" and "dangerous."<sup>193</sup> Unbeknownst to

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<sup>189</sup>White, Making Of The President, 111-15.

<sup>190</sup>New York Times, March 19, 1964.

<sup>191</sup>*Ibid.*, March 14, 1964.

<sup>192</sup>Goldwater National Television Broadcast, May 14, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume I, p.3, Barry M. Goldwater Collection, Arizona Historical Foundation, Tempe, Arizona.

<sup>193</sup>New York Times, April 1, 1964.

the candidates, President Johnson had already secretly approved Operation Plan 34A, which the Pentagon Papers described as "an elaborate program of covert military operations against the state of North Vietnam."<sup>194</sup>

Rockefeller stepped-up his attacks after Goldwater received the endorsement of California's Republican Assembly for the state's June primary. Rockefeller charged that right wing extremists had infiltrated the California GOP and that Goldwater remained out of the mainstream of the Republican Party. The senator reacted to the accusations with a detailed recounting of his Senate voting record, which reflected consistent support for Republican initiatives. He dismissed the extremism charge as a "phantom issue."<sup>195</sup>

Concurrently, Oregon polling data indicated that Lodge and Rockefeller held large leads over Goldwater, and on the advice of staff, the Arizonan curtailed his personal appearances in the Northwest in order to concentrate his efforts on delegate rich California. Rockefeller remained in Oregon to campaign as the moderate GOP candidate and continued to lash the senator on the issues of social security and foreign affairs. The governor contended that he was the only candidate who cared enough about Oregon voters to campaign there. Goldwater was faring equally badly in national polling contests where he trailed both Lodge and Nixon. Still, it was party delegates not the general public who nominated presidential candidates, and Goldwater supporters

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<sup>194</sup>Pentagon Papers, (New York, 1972, New York Times-Bantam version), 263.

<sup>195</sup>New York Times, April 1, 1964.

dominated many precinct, district, county, and state organizations. In an Associated Press poll of GOP County Chairman released on April 19, 35.0 percent expected Nixon to ultimately win the nomination versus the 28.7 percent who forecast a Goldwater victory; significantly though, 45 percent preferred the senator as their nominee compared to just 18 percent for the former vice president.<sup>196</sup>

April and May were decisive months for Goldwater across the country. In several mid-western primaries he ran virtually uncontested. The formidable grass roots organization, "Draft Goldwater," had effectively cultivated a majority of party leaders and consequently little campaigning was needed to compile impressive delegate counts. For example, in Illinois, his only declared opponent was Senator Smith, and while Goldwater's margin of victory was less than anticipated, he collected 63 percent of the votes and the commitment of most of the state's forty-eight delegates. This phenomenon was repeated throughout much of the country. In many states, such as Texas and Nebraska that used conventions to select national delegates, Goldwater acquired votes faster than all other candidates combined.

The Oregon vote on May 15 threatened to temper these Goldwater victories. As the campaign closed, opinion polls reflected Rockefeller gains at the expense of Lodge's onetime commanding lead. Oregonians surprised most

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<sup>196</sup>John H. Kessel, The Goldwater Coalition: Republican Strategies in 1964, (New York, 1968), 65.

analysts by selecting Rockefeller first with 33 percent of the vote. Closing opinion polls had still favored Lodge, who placed second with 27 percent, trailed by Goldwater with 18 percent, Nixon with 17 percent, Smith with 3 percent, and Scranton with 2 percent. More important than the state's eighteen delegates, the primary demonstrated Rockefeller's electability and provided his campaign with sorely needed momentum and confidence going into the crucial California race. Despite Goldwater's lackluster performance in Oregon, Newsweek recognized his steady accumulation of delegates elsewhere in the country. The magazine suggested that even without a victory in California, the Arizona senator might compile enough delegate support to win the GOP nomination on the first convention ballot. Given that only 15 percent of Republicans nationally supported a Goldwater presidential nomination, Newsweek described his delegate count as nothing short of "remarkable."<sup>197</sup>

Unlike the Oregon primary, the California ballot included only the names of announced candidates who had submitted qualifying voter petitions in March. Not eligible for the primary, Lodge supporters temporarily backed Rockefeller's bid for the Golden State's eighty-six delegates. Early polling data indicated a double digit lead for the governor. Nixon and Scranton remained neutral, but quietly hoped for a Rockefeller victory and a deadlocked July convention. Sensing a possible end to the Goldwater crusade, both undeclared candidates discretely courted the Arizonan and his delegates. The senator

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<sup>197</sup>Newsweek, May 18, 1964, 48.

privately acknowledged that he preferred Scranton to any other potential candidate.<sup>198</sup>

Foreign affairs resurfaced as an important campaign issue in California. Goldwater claimed that the United States was following "the most disastrous foreign policy in its history" and that the administration was sacrificing American soldiers in Vietnam because of "old and inadequate equipment."<sup>199</sup> The New York Times referred to Goldwater's attacks on Johnson's Vietnam policies as his "favorite issue," and the senator reiterated his promise to achieve victory in Vietnam with an "aggressive prosecution" of the war.<sup>200</sup> Rockefeller restated his charge that Goldwater's views on national defense were impulsive, dangerous, and out of the mainstream. He scoffed at the senator's policy statements on Vietnam and announced, "I don't believe the answer to our foreign policy failures is found in reckless belligerence."<sup>201</sup> Goldwater promptly substantiated Rockefeller's charges with another incident reminiscent of New Hampshire.

On May 24, during the ABC news program "Issues and Answers," Goldwater was asked about U.S. intervention in Vietnam. Recounting a recent meeting held between the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Joint

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<sup>198</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 213.

<sup>199</sup>Los Angeles Times, May 31, 1964.

<sup>200</sup>New York Times, May 12, 1964.

<sup>201</sup>*Ibid.*, May 27, 1964.

Chiefs of Staff, Goldwater stated that the use of low-yield nuclear weapons was considered as an option to defoliating the dense jungles that concealed Vietnamese supply routes. After the interview, the Associated Press and the United Press International reported that Goldwater advocated the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam. The New York Times commented that the more Goldwater was criticized for militant foreign policy statements the more he made them. The senator attempted to clarify his position, "I would use conventional weapons. I would not use atomic weapons when conventional weapons will do the job."<sup>202</sup> Later the AP issued a correction and the UPI retracted the story, but the militant Goldwater image had been reinforced. The senator's next setback did not result from a misinterpretation or a "Goldwaterism."

On May 25, the New York Herald Tribune published a front page letter written by former President Eisenhower describing the ideal Republican presidential candidate. The paper ran a parallel article interpreting the letter as an attack on the Arizona senator. Eisenhower, pressured by anti-Goldwater forces, called for a "responsible, forward looking candidate" who rejected simple solutions and "impulsiveness" in foreign affairs.<sup>203</sup> Goldwater recognized the article as a timely, disguised assault but countered that he fit Ike's description as well as Rockefeller. The senator attempted to minimize the

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<sup>202</sup>Los Angeles Times, May 27, 1964.

<sup>203</sup>New York Times, May 25, 1964.

untimely damage and in jest sent photographs to Eisenhower and the press of himself posing with an arrow under his arm, appearing to have been shot in the back.<sup>204</sup>

The Arizonan's recent difficulties were reflected in new polling data. A Harris poll reported a 51 to 41 percent advantage for Rockefeller over Goldwater in California due largely to foreign policy issues. Although Goldwater had begun to attract a majority of previously undecided voters, the pollster doubted the senator's ability to win the primary.<sup>205</sup> In a last-ditch effort to capitalize on the Goldwater image, the Rockefeller camp mailed more than one million pamphlets to Republican households. The headline on the mailing read, "Who Do You Want in the Room with the H Bomb?".<sup>206</sup> Rockefeller told reporters that Californians had a choice between either "constructive, forward looking, responsibility or narrow, doctrinaire, extremism."<sup>207</sup> The Goldwater camp launched a massive counterattack including a last-minute advertising blitz coordinated with the mass deployment of loyal foot soldiers who enthusiastically knocked on voters' doors.

Goldwater's fortunes turned noticeably on May 30 when Mrs. Rockefeller gave birth to a baby girl. The ensuing publicity served to rekindle the public's

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<sup>204</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 214.

<sup>205</sup>Los Angeles Times, May 29, 1964.

<sup>206</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 216.

<sup>207</sup>New York Times, June 2, 1964.

negative attitudes surrounding the couple's recent divorces and remarriage. On the next day, just prior to the election, former President Eisenhower told reporters that his recent newspaper article had not purposely been anti-Goldwater, and any such inferences were "complete misinterpretations."<sup>208</sup> This last minute flurry of events greatly benefitted Goldwater, and late preelection polls indicated that voting would be extremely close. On June 2, Californians granted Goldwater a narrow but important 51 to 49 percent victory. The election's momentum carried over to additional victories in Washington, Colorado, Minnesota, Virginia, Texas and Alabama. This series of triumphs seemed to assure the maverick the Republican nomination.

Shortly after his climactic victory in California, Goldwater traveled to Washington to cast his vote on the controversial 1964 Civil Rights Act. The legislation had been debated in the Senate for several months, but Goldwater and other senators considered certain provisions of the law to be unconstitutional and recommended further amendment. He stated that the bill had been rashly passed because of political pressures and claimed that "if they could have locked the doors to the Senate and turned off the lights, you wouldn't have gotten 25 votes [in favor of the Act]."<sup>209</sup> Goldwater had been a civil rights advocate for nearly twenty years. He had helped desegregate Arizona's Air National Guard and Phoenix's lunch counters. He supported the

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<sup>208</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 67.

<sup>209</sup>Ibid., 93.



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and had voted for the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960. But his criticism of certain components of the 1964 legislation allowed opponents to label him a racist and segregationist. Political adversaries contended that Goldwater was pandering to white Southern voters and to a "backlash" vote in the North, a charge he categorically denied. Even New York Times columnist James Reston, hardly a Goldwater supporter, characterized the senator's defense of his position as "courageous."<sup>210</sup>

Disturbed over Goldwater's posturing on civil rights and by his surprising California victory, former President Eisenhower arranged a private meeting with Governor Scranton in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to discuss mutual concerns for the party's leadership. Scranton left the meeting under the false impression that Ike would endorse him as a late challenger to Goldwater. Eisenhower subsequently announced that he would not support a stop-Goldwater movement. On June 6 at the Annual Conference of Governors in Cleveland, Michigan governor Romney gave a rare Sunday press conference and attacked Goldwater as an extremist. The senator responded by complaining that his opponents seemed "more intent on wrecking the party than on helping to win some elections."<sup>211</sup> Six days later, without Eisenhower's public support, Scranton announced his belated candidacy for the Republican nomination. The

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<sup>210</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 173.

<sup>211</sup>Novak, The Agony, 435.

Pennsylvania governor wasted no time perpetuating the Goldwater image. Scranton proclaimed that he offered the GOP a "real choice" and that he rejected the "echo of fear and of reaction - - the echo from the never-never land that puts our nation on the road backward to a lesser place in the world of free men."<sup>212</sup> Scranton received the support of a somewhat deflated Rockefeller organization, and Henry Cabot Lodge resigned his ambassadorship to South Vietnam and returned stateside to roundout the GOP's anti-Goldwater coalition.

Scranton campaigned vigorously in twelve states during June and soon replaced Lodge and Rockefeller atop national opinion polls, but it was too late. National delegate support for Goldwater was deep and unwavering. With a clear majority of votes intact for a first ballot nomination, Goldwater hoped the Republican convention would be a celebration of the conservative wing's victory and serve as a launching pad for the party's reclamation of the White House. The 1964 convention was anything but a celebration of the conservative movement. Instead, the convention, later referred to as a "bloody Republican civil war," displayed the dramatic division between the party's conservative and liberal factions.<sup>213</sup>

Five days before the opening of the San Francisco convention, Scranton was still searching for a divisive incident to derail the Goldwater nomination.

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<sup>212</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 70.

<sup>213</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 220.

The governor appeared on the NBC morning show "Today" calling the Arizonan "impulsive" and he characterized a recent Goldwater interview in Der Spiegel as "reckless and dangerous."<sup>214</sup> The June 30 interview with the German news magazine became one of several controversies at the Cow Palace, and reporter Charles McDowell went so far as to called it "the central issue and basic document of the convention."<sup>215</sup> The press repeatedly called on Goldwater to defend his comments in the interview. The article covered a broad range of subjects but emphasized foreign policy issues such as foreign aid, involvement in Vietnam, and relations with Germany. A translation of the interview as printed by U.S. News & World Report revealed classic Goldwaterisms, many of which are worth recounting to demonstrate his ongoing willingness to engage in the type of controversial conversation that had plagued his campaign.<sup>216</sup> Responding to a question about his "shoot from the hip" style, Goldwater said, "I'll have to admit that I possibly do shoot from the hip...I'm not the most intelligent man...and a lot of people think I'm quite ignorant...[but] I've experienced more things probably than most men of this Congress...and I don't have to stop and think in detail about them." He expressed his concern about the Soviet Union's increasing military parity, but stated that "the United States is strong enough militarily to do pretty much

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<sup>214</sup>New York Times, July 10, 1964.

<sup>215</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 89.

<sup>216</sup>U.S. News & World Report, July 20, 1964, 70-72.

what she wants to do with Russia." The senator acknowledged that he was willing to take the country to the brink of war against communism, given the successful precedents of the Straits of Formosa, of Lebanon, of Egypt, of Greece, and of Berlin. When questioned about the U.S. commitment to Vietnam he responded, "I think President Johnson is tending in that direction - - that we aren't going to pull out of Southeast Asia, but that we are going to win, in fact. Now the next decision becomes based on military decisions. I don't think that's up to a Presidential candidate, or even the President. I would turn to my Joints Chiefs of Staff and say: 'Fellows, we made a decision to win; now it's your problem'."<sup>217</sup>

The interview also indicated that Goldwater favored strengthening the United State's military alliances, and when asked about Germany's participation, he said "An alliance with Germany is, I think, imperative....had not Germany in both wars been subjected to the supreme command of men—or a man in any case - - who didn't understand war, I think Germany would have won both of them." Regarding foreign aid, Goldwater acknowledged the benefits of the Marshall Plan - - "there was some wisdom to it" - - but he remained opposed to further economic aid, saying "I don't want to give it. Period." Instead, Goldwater proposed a multinational fund for extending credit to needy nations. He contended that "this business of the United States just willy-nilly giving billions of dollars away and receiving nothing in return - - I

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<sup>217</sup>Ibid., 70-72.

can't buy that. We can't afford it."<sup>218</sup>

The militant nature of Goldwater's responses in the Der Spiegel article deepened the schism within the Republican Party. The interview had also indicated his doubt that he could win the presidential election. When asked if he could beat Johnson, Goldwater said "as of now - - no...I don't think any Republican can - - as of now. But I don't think Johnson is better equipped than I would be. Nor do I think I am the best man in the Republican party or...in the United States. I...decided to give the people...a chance to express themselves. Look the idea of becoming a United States Senator scares the hell out of me. Becoming President is even more so."<sup>219</sup>

Obviously the probability of Goldwater's presidential nomination also frightened his Republican opponents. Upon his arrival at the San Francisco convention, former Ambassador Lodge noted that his primary task there was to "picture Mr. Goldwater...as an imprudent and trigger happy candidate who would rather drop bombs rather than carry out a cautious foreign policy."<sup>220</sup> Goldwater was bitter over the continued attacks and did little to calm the emotions of adversaries at the convention. On July 12, the last day before the convention, the Arizonan received a damning letter from desperate Scranton supporters. The letter was a condemnation of the senator, branding him an

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<sup>218</sup>Ibid.

<sup>219</sup>Ibid.

<sup>220</sup>New York Times, July 9, 1964.

"irresponsible radical" and describing his ardent delegate supporters as "little more than a flock of chickens whose necks will be wrung at will."<sup>221</sup> The letter concluded with a call for an open debate at the convention between the two candidates. Charles McDowell described this communication as "perhaps the most remarkable episode in the strange, ill-starred odyssey of William W. Scranton."<sup>222</sup> For Goldwater the incident ended any possibility of a Scranton vice presidential nomination, and he sent copies of the letter to all convention delegates and to the press. He attached a copy of an anecdote written by Abraham Lincoln to Horace Greely. The passage read:

Dear Sir: I have just read yours of the 19th addressed to myself through the New York Tribune. If there be in it any statement or assumptions of fact, which I may know to be erroneous, I do not, now and here, controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not, now and here, argue against them. If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it deference to an old friend, whose heart I have always supposed to be right."<sup>223</sup>

McDowell noted the irony that just before Goldwater's nomination, "the moderates were practicing extremism and the extremists [were] quoting Lincoln on forgiveness and restraint."<sup>224</sup>

With the Scranton letter disarmed, convention activities proceeded with routine business. Goldwater supporters ensured that the Republican platform met with the senator's approval by rejecting attempts to alter three crucial

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<sup>221</sup>Los Angeles Times, July 13, 1964.

<sup>222</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 108.

<sup>223</sup>Los Angeles Times, July 13, 1964.

<sup>224</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 112.

sections. First, to alleviate fears that the GOP was being taken over by right wing radicals, Rockefeller called for the denunciation of radical groups including the John Birch Society and the Klu Klux Klan. The draft platform already read "we are against all extreme groups of left and the right who are violent."<sup>225</sup> The 1964 Democratic Platform would contain specific denunciations, but Goldwater and even Eisenhower were against naming specific groups. Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania introduced a second Scranton-inspired amendment emphasizing Republican support for the Civil Rights Act. The Goldwater camp was satisfied with the first draft, which read "we pledge full implementation and faithful execution of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and all other civil rights statutes, to assure equal rights and opportunities guaranteed by the Constitution to every citizen." The third major amendment called for specific language stating the party's belief that only the President had control of the country's nuclear arsenal. This amendment was the most unacceptable to the conservatives, given Goldwater's position that NATO's Supreme Commander should have the authority to repel a Soviet invasion with nuclear weapons. Under the heading "NATO: The Great Shield" the platform draft read, "Republican leadership will move immediately...to explore and recommend effective new ways to strengthen alliance participation and fulfillment."<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>225</sup>Kirk H. Porter and Donald Bruce Johnson, National Party Platforms, 1840-1968 (Chicago, 1972), 683.

<sup>226</sup>*Ibid.*, 683, 688.

Goldwater kept foreign affairs at the forefront of the convention by giving foreign policy addresses at Youth for Goldwater rallies on July 13 and July 14. He chose not to mention the Johnson administration specifically but instead attacked the "weakness and cowardice" of the "New Frontier." He proclaimed that "my opponents will call me a warmonger. But I'm the best peacemonger among all the candidates. The surest way to disaster is the road we're following. The surest way to preserve the peace is through strength - - political, moral, economic and military."<sup>227</sup> The senator's speeches did little to promote GOP unity.

On the night of July 14, the Republican Party dramatically displayed its continuing dissension on national television. The Goldwater staff had arranged for the proposed platform amendments to be presented to delegates late at night to prevent a large television viewership, and by the time Rockefeller took the podium it was almost midnight eastern time. When he called for changes to the civil rights portion of the platform, he was booed and jeered by the crowd in the gallery. The Goldwaterites had cornered their villain, the eastern liberal, the enemy of conservatism, and they attacked him "viciously." Even Goldwater was dismayed by the spectacle. Others presenting amendment proposals were treated with "grudging tolerance."<sup>228</sup> When the ballots were cast for changes to the platform, all amendments were rejected by a large

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<sup>227</sup>Los Angeles Times, July 15, 1964.

<sup>228</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 126-27.



majority of delegates.

On the following day "in a scene that resembled the lynching of liberalism," Barry Morris Goldwater was nominated as the Republican presidential candidate on the first ballot.<sup>229</sup> He needed 655 votes and received 883. Two days later Goldwater chose New York congressman and Republican National Chairman William E. Miller as his vice presidential nominee. Miller, a former assistant prosecutor at the Nuremberg war crime trials in Germany, was a Catholic from New York, and Goldwater believed that the loyal conservative brought geographic and religious diversity to the ticket.

While preparing his nomination acceptance speech, Goldwater was informed that President Johnson was leading in early public opinion polls 80 to 20 percent. He told his staff that "we should be putting together a rejection speech and tell them all to go to hell." Recognizing Goldwater's opportunity to articulate his positions, the speech writers rejected rapprochement with fellow Republicans despite a conciliatory concession address by Governor Scranton. According to Goldwater his address signaled "a historic break from the party's liberal past."<sup>230</sup> The uncompromising speech accused the Democratic leadership of weak and deceitful foreign policies that let "our finest men die on battlefields unmarked by purpose, pride, or the prospect of victory."<sup>231</sup> He

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<sup>229</sup>Eric F. Goldman, The Tragedy Of Lyndon Johnson (New York, 1969), 168.

<sup>230</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 235-36.

<sup>231</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., ed., History of American Presidential Elections, 1940-1968 (New York, 1971), IV:3667. A complete reprint of the speech is provided.

proclaimed that the country was at war in Vietnam but that Johnson refused to "say whether or not the objective is victory."<sup>232</sup> The leader of conservatism asserted that "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice! And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!"<sup>233</sup> A news correspondent covering the convention was astonished by the aggressive tone of the address and muttered "Oh my God he is going to run [for president] as Goldwater."<sup>234</sup>

Political analysts described the GOP convention as disastrous and pondered its effect on the future of the party. Interestingly, domestic critics agreed with many East European leaders in their assessments. Liberal journalists interpreted the Goldwater nomination as a prescription for World War III. Nikita Khrushchev likened the convention to a "NAZI party rally." And Polish Communist Party chief, Wladyslaw Gomulka described Goldwater's nomination as "unfavorable to peace" and feared that the senator's foreign policies were directed "straight toward a global nuclear catastrophe."<sup>235</sup>

Goldwater's nomination was a remarkable political achievement. At no time during the campaign did he ever lead national opinion polls as the party's favorite candidate. His limited appeal to the majority of rank and file party

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<sup>232</sup>Barry M. Goldwater, Where I Stand (New York, 1964), 12-13.

<sup>233</sup>Schlesinger, American Presidential Elections, IV:3669.

<sup>234</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 137.

<sup>235</sup>New York Times, July 22, 1964.

members was clearly demonstrated in the three most contested primaries. First in New Hampshire, he was soundly defeated by an undeclared candidate stationed more than 10,000 miles away in Southeast Asia. Two months later he suffered a more decisive defeat in Oregon when matched against a full slate of GOP leaders. Only in California, when the qualified ballot was limited to just two candidates, did Goldwater muster a narrow victory.

How then did the Arizonan manage to win the nomination? Goldwater had acquired a devoted national following of conservative voters during the preceding ten years, a result of his non-stop public speaking tours on behalf the of Republican Party and due to the popularity of his two books, The Conscience Of A Conservative and Why Not Victory?. The senator provided the GOP right wing with a distinct moral ideology that filled a leadership vacuum resulting from the death of Senator Robert A. Taft and the demise of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Even the combination of Goldwater's campaign blunders, which appeared to substantiate charges of extremism and warmongering and the press's periodic misrepresentation of his views could not weaken the faith of his conservative supporters. Under the careful orchestration of Cliff White and the Draft Goldwater Committee, the conservatives had successfully infiltrated and dominated many local and state party organizations, thereby warding off the potential for serious challengers in most primary elections and state conventions. Furthermore, the divided liberal and moderate opposition proved unable to counter this organizational effort.

After the California primary, with the GOP nomination practically assured, Goldwater uncharacteristically failed to prepare a strategy to reconcile the splintered party. Any Republican nominee in 1964 was a dark horse candidate and consequently needed a cohesive party in order to mount one of the most herculean campaign efforts since the GOP battled FDR for the White House. The Arizonan mistakenly expected the same magnanimous gestures from his opponents that he had displayed at the 1960 convention. The unprecedented and relentless assault on Goldwater from fellow Republicans had rendered him unable to make the necessary compromises needed to unite the party behind his candidacy.

The means by which Barry Goldwater and his minority wing won the GOP nomination were impossible to replicate in a two-party national election for the presidency. The Republicans, the minority political party, challenged a larger, more firmly united opposition, and Goldwater's small body of fervent supporters could not dominate a majority of the national electorate. Before Goldwater had begun his quest for the presidency in January 1964, the national electorate knew and cared little about the views of Arizona's junior senator. But once the New Hampshire campaign got underway there were daily news reports on Goldwater and the public began to assess his policy positions and qualifications to become their president. Over time the regular media coverage of Goldwater's off-the-cuff statements and Governor Rockefeller's perpetuation of the senator's image as a dangerous extremist began to resonate negatively

with voters. His image was transformed from that of a maverick senator to an extremist presidential candidate. Goldwater's views on domestic issues such as social security and civil rights alarmed many liberal and moderate voters, but it was the growing perception of him as a radical threatening nuclear war that truly frightened the general electorate. As both parties looked ahead to the presidential election, Senator Sam Nunn concisely characterized the growing national impression of Goldwater's foreign policy views and campaign style as "Ready! Fire! Aim!"<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>236</sup>Goldwater and Casserly, Goldwater, 238.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **BACK ON THE DEFENSIVE:**

**Lyndon Johnson, Barry Goldwater**

**And The Issue Of War And Peace**

Separated in age by one year, Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater were both members of the World War II generation. As a young man, Goldwater began a business career while Johnson pursued politics after a brief stint as a school teacher. Although they developed opposing views on the domestic role of government, the two Westerners shared common assumptions about foreign relations. Following the war, Johnson and Goldwater supported the militant containment policy set forth by the Truman administration. They believed that international communism posed a threat to U.S. security interests and that heightened peacetime defense appropriations were a necessary deterrent to future world wars. During the eight years of the Eisenhower administration, Senators Johnson and Goldwater remained loyal Cold Warriors advocating massive military budgets and supporting the President's foreign policy. During the Kennedy-Johnson administration, Goldwater became a more vocal critic of U.S. foreign policy. He attacked Kennedy on many fronts: for grossly

overstating the relative strength of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, for the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, and for a general lack of commitment to achieve "total victory" over communism.<sup>237</sup> The senator's disdain for Democratic leadership in international affairs carried over to the Johnson presidency and, consequently, became a major issue in the 1964 election.

Upon the sudden death of President Kennedy in November 1963, Lyndon Johnson's leadership experience proved invaluable to the nation. His modesty and call for unity at a time of crisis comforted a shocked and grieving nation. Stressing themes of continuity and consensus, the new President focused the nation's agenda inward as he championed previously stalled Kennedy legislation.<sup>238</sup> After less than twelve months in office, Johnson oversaw the approval of an \$11.5 billion tax cut complemented by a reduction in the federal budget and passage of the Economic Opportunity Act which launched the War on Poverty.<sup>239</sup> In July 1964, the President signed into law the historic Civil Rights Act which further protected black Americans from discrimination in housing, employment, schools, and places of public accommodation. Amidst this flurry of legislative activity, Johnson confided privately, "We've got to keep this Kennedy aura around us through this [the

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<sup>237</sup>Congressional Record, July 24, 1961, 87th Congress, 2nd Session, p.13246.

<sup>238</sup>For a detailed account of LBJ's first year as President see Eric F. Goldman, The Tragedy Of Lyndon Johnson (New York, 1969), 1-256.

<sup>239</sup>Despite vigorous opposition from Republican senator Karl Mundt, Johnson also oversaw legislation allowing the sale of surplus wheat to Russia and other communist countries. See Lyndon B. Johnson, The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969 (New York, 1971), 39.

1964 presidential] election."<sup>240</sup> According to Johnson aide Eric F. Goldman, the Texan had dreamed about living in the White House and "now was the chance...to win the presidency."<sup>241</sup>

Lyndon Baines Johnson was born in 1908 in rural central Texas, the son of Sam E. Johnson, Jr., a sometime barber, teacher, justice of the peace and populist legislator. "Sam Johnson's boy" was bright and energetic. Following high school, young Johnson attended South West Texas Teachers College in San Marcos, and upon graduation taught public school in rural Texas before moving to a Houston high school in 1930. In 1931 he actively campaigned for Texas congressman Richard Kleberg, who subsequently hired Johnson as his full-time congressional secretary. Johnson immersed himself in the political process, emerged as a marginal Washington player and even came to dominate Kleberg. In 1935 he left Washington to become the Texas Director of the National Youth Administration. Less than two years later, Johnson resigned from the NYA to run for Congress. He campaigned as an earnest New Deal liberal, won the election and embarked on a brilliant political career.

During his first seven years in Congress, Johnson aligned himself with Roosevelt's domestic and international initiatives. His votes for a peacetime draft, for pro-British and French amendments to neutrality legislation, and for creation of Lend-Lease, all demonstrated his loyalty to the President's foreign

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<sup>240</sup>Eric Foner and John Garraty, ed., The Reader's Companion to American History (Boston, 1991), 600.

<sup>241</sup>Goldman, Tragedy Of Lyndon Johnson, 171.



policy agenda. Biographer Robert Dallek noted that the Texan had advocated increased defense spending from "the moment he set foot in the House in 1937."<sup>242</sup> Government's heightened spending during the early 1940s enabled Johnson to funnel sorely needed capital into the Texas economy, and he took an active role in the development of military installations across the state. During World War II, Johnson worked for the Navy Department managing war materials production in Texas and on the west coast.<sup>243</sup>

Sensing the nation's general postwar conservatism, Johnson accentuated his states' rights perspective on labor issues, civil rights, and pro-oil industry legislation and won reelection to the House in both 1944 and 1946. As the Cold War developed, he became increasingly attentive to foreign policy and fervently supported the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In 1948 he ran for the U.S. Senate by extolling the virtues of his ten years of public service and by characterizing his opponent as a unionist and isolationist. Campaigning against the backdrop of the Berlin crisis, Johnson found speeches against communism "an irresistible tactic." His Cold War hyperbole energized crowds, as he promoted increased military preparedness as a deterrent to communist aggression which, he warned,

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<sup>242</sup>Robert Dallek, Lone Star Rising: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908-1960 (New York, 1991), 9.

<sup>243</sup>Eager to establish any semblance of a combat record, Johnson managed to arrange two trips abroad. A trip to the Pacific Theater earned him a Silver Star which, according to his biographer Dallek, was "the least deserved and most displayed medal" of the war. A second excursion to Europe late in the war impressed upon Johnson the region's vulnerability to subversive communist movements.

"surges forward in a blood-red tide." With both candidates committing voting fraud, Johnson won election to the Senate by a mere eighty-seven votes, thereby earning the nickname "Landslide Lyndon."<sup>244</sup>

As a freshmen senator, Johnson supported President Truman's Fair Deal programs, save civil rights and pro-labor amendments to the Taft-Hartley law. His political ambitions led to pragmatic relationships with Democratic conservatives like Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia and liberals such as Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota. As a member of the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Commerce committees, Johnson continued to support Truman's Cold War policies including the comprehensive military build-up outlined in National Security Council Memorandum No. 68.<sup>245</sup>

Senate Democrats suffered key reelection losses in 1950. Arizonan Ernest W. McFarland was elevated to Senate Democratic leader and Johnson, perceived as a hard working centrist, was made the youngest whip in party history. McFarland's subsequent election loss to GOP upstart Barry Goldwater in 1952 enabled Johnson to advance to Democratic majority leader. As Senate leader he implemented a strategy for the Democrats' return to the majority; it emphasized strong party unity and bipartisan foreign policy, which the Texan called the "politics of responsibility."<sup>246</sup> In his 1954 reelection bid, "Landslide

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<sup>244</sup>Dallek, Lone Star Rising, 299, 323, 343.

<sup>245</sup>*Ibid.*, 396-97.

<sup>246</sup>*Ibid.*, 441.

Lyndon" earned a true landslide victory, winning 71 percent of the vote while the Democrats simultaneously regained their majority in the Senate.

Majority Leader Johnson's shrewd management of Senate rules, committee appointments, legislative scheduling, and other responsibilities (which frequently ignored the tradition of seniority) helped consolidate his power and improve his effectiveness as party leader. Johnson oversaw the passage of voluminous legislation effecting trade, social security, wages and housing. His legislative accomplishments resulted in part from the infamous "Johnson treatment," which historian Robert A. Divine defined as a "judicious mixture of enticement and fear."<sup>247</sup> By 1956 Johnson was considered a leading presidential candidate, and Joseph P. Kennedy even offered to sponsor a Johnson-John F. Kennedy ticket. The Texan declined the offer and refused to campaign overtly for the nomination. Although Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson eventually won the Democratic nomination, Johnson sensed that the White House was within his grasp and began to position himself for a possible presidential run in 1960. In Congress he sought to accommodate liberal Democrats by slowly reversing his states' rights position on civil rights and attempted to appear more independent of President Eisenhower's foreign policies. Still an ardent Cold Warrior, much of Johnson's partisan maneuvering on foreign affairs, such as rebuking Ike's criticism of Israel during the Suez

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<sup>247</sup>Robert A. Divine, Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Recent American History (New York, 1979), 142.

crisis, remained largely symbolic. In the summer of 1960, LBJ supported the Republican President during the collapse of the U.S.-Soviet Paris summit. He shrewdly manipulated the circumstances to criticize rival presidential aspirant John Kennedy, who had blasted Eisenhower for the failed conference.

The Democrats were not lacking presidential candidates in 1960. Johnson again decided not to organize an overt campaign, preferring instead to be drafted. A draft never materialized. Kennedy's candidacy benefitted from solid organization and strong financial backing and he scored primary victories in New Hampshire, Wisconsin and West Virginia.<sup>248</sup> Against the advice of friends, Johnson embarked on a belated run for the nomination, hoping for a deadlocked convention. Instead, the youthful Massachusetts senator won on the first ballot. Surprisingly, Kennedy asked Johnson to become the vice presidential nominee. LBJ, who had often referred to JFK as a "lightweight," a "playboy" or simply as "the boy," accepted the offer believing "power is where power goes."<sup>249</sup> After serving twenty-three years in Congress, Lyndon Johnson left the federal legislature as "the most powerful Majority Leader in Senate history."<sup>250</sup>

Johnson hoped to elevate the vice presidency. He quickly solicited

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<sup>248</sup>Theodore H. White, The Making Of The President 1960 (New York, 1961), 78-114.

<sup>249</sup>Dallek, Lone Star Rising, 579. Shortly after Johnson accepted the nomination, a shocked fellow senator, Barry Goldwater, wrote to him; it is difficult "to understand how you are going to try to embrace the socialist platform of your party...You were intended for great things, but I don't think you are going to achieve them now." See Vantage Point, 102.

<sup>250</sup>Dallek, Lone Star Rising, 590.

unprecedented responsibility and authority and even suggested that he occupy an office adjoining the President's. Kennedy deftly rejected the aggressive overtures. Although the President routinely consulted with Johnson on major issues, the Vice President was never fully accepted into Kennedy's inner circle of advisors. This was apparent by his absence from cabinet meeting discussions on important domestic issues such as the 1962 steel crisis and the integration of James Meredith into the University of Mississippi. Johnson was also missing from key foreign affairs meetings including those surrounding the Bay of Pigs invasion and many of the Executive Committee gatherings during the Cuban missile crisis.

Johnson became increasingly frustrated by his limited responsibilities and bristled at the administration's inability to pass major legislation. The former senate majority leader "retreated into a shell."<sup>251</sup> Nevertheless, Kennedy possessed sincere respect and affection for Johnson and sought to involve him in "meaningful activity" with appointments as chairman of the administration's Space Council and the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. Furthermore, the President limited his own travel abroad and dispatched Johnson on more than two dozen diplomatic missions, including an important August 1961 trip to West Berlin designed to demonstrate U.S. commitment to Germany during construction of the Berlin Wall. The Vice President enjoyed his international assignments as they made him the center of press attention

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<sup>251</sup>James N. Giglio, The Presidency of John F. Kennedy (Lawrence, KS, 1991), 39, 133.

and provided at least temporary freedom from the Kennedy White House.

Johnson's most publicized mission abroad was to South Vietnam. In late April 1961 Kennedy began to receive recommendations to deploy U.S. combat troops to South Vietnam from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and from an inter-departmental task force studying Vietnam.<sup>252</sup> In May, Kennedy sent the Vice President on an extended tour of Southeast Asia which included a lengthy layover in Saigon. Johnson publicly lauded President Ngo Dinh Diem and upon his return to Washington advised the President not to give up on the South Vietnamese leader. He reminded reporters that, "he's the only boy we got out there," but privately warned Kennedy that Diem was "beset by many problems...[and] is remote from the people."<sup>253</sup> Johnson, like most presidential advisors, later rejected all propositions that the United States abandon South Vietnam and, instead, he encouraged Kennedy to take stronger military action. He counseled that "The battle against Communism must be joined in Southeast Asia with strength and determination to achieve success there."<sup>254</sup> Despite his travels abroad and domestic appointments, Johnson was considered "underemployed" in the vice presidency and his three-year tenure was "the lowest point" of his remarkable political career.<sup>255</sup> Still, just prior to

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<sup>252</sup>Theodore C. Sorensen, Kennedy (New York, 1965), 652.

<sup>253</sup>David Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest (New York, 1992), 134.

<sup>254</sup>Giglio, John F. Kennedy, 135.

<sup>255</sup>Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest, 133.

Kennedy's assassination, the Texan, who undoubtedly was planning four years ahead, had accepted the President's offer to remain on the Democratic ticket for the upcoming presidential election.

After Kennedy's death, Lyndon Johnson's 1964 presidential nomination was never in serious jeopardy, although Alabama's Democratic governor George C. Wallace entered several primary elections. Promoting himself as a conservative alternative, the governor attracted a surprisingly large following.<sup>256</sup> The Wallace candidacy appealed to a "white back-lash" among racial segregationists, and he received 30 percent of the vote in Indiana, 34 percent in Wisconsin and an astonishing 43 percent in Maryland.<sup>257</sup> Despite these respectable showings, the governor ended his campaign in July under the shadow of an allegedly more viable conservative candidate, Barry Goldwater, who had been nominated at the GOP San Francisco convention. It was Johnson's clandestine selection of a running mate and the politically dangerous insurgence of an all black Mississippi delegation at the Democratic National Convention that provided the most compelling drama for the Democrats in 1964.

President Johnson had enjoyed such high popularity ratings during his first year in office that the selection of a running-mate appeared almost insignificant. But in typical Johnsonian fashion he engaged in a "name dropping game" and

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<sup>256</sup>Stephen Leshner, George Wallace: American Populist (New York, 1994), 267-310.

<sup>257</sup>Theodore H. White, The Making Of The President 1964 (New York, 1969), 233-34.

manipulated various potential nominees.<sup>258</sup> As a test of his abilities, the President called upon Senate Majority Whip Hubert H. Humphrey to resolve the only crisis of the Atlantic City Democratic Convention.

Attempts to register black voters into the lily-white Mississippi Democratic Party had failed miserably prior to the convention as blacks had been barred from county and state conventions. As a result, blacks formed a new party, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.<sup>259</sup> Forty-four MFDP delegates went to Atlantic City to contest the seats of Mississippi's all-white delegation. Fearing the disruption of a nasty floor fight before a national television audience, Johnson demanded that a compromise be arranged. Humphrey, aided by Minnesota attorney general Walter Mondale and labor leader Walter Reuther, proposed a three pronged solution: that two MFDP delegates be allowed to vote at large, that the white Mississippi delegation pledge allegiance to the Johnson ticket, and that no delegates from states which discriminated against blacks be allowed to participate in future conventions. The compromise was clearly biased toward conservative southern delegates, whom Johnson feared would bolt the party and support Goldwater. Texas governor John Connally had warned the President, "If you seat those black buggers the whole South will walk out."<sup>260</sup> Mississippi's black delegation firmly rejected the token

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<sup>258</sup>Hubert H. Humphrey The Education Of A Public Man: My Life and Politics (New York, 1976), 297.

<sup>259</sup>Harvard Sitkoff, The Struggle for Black Equality 1954-1980 (New York, 1981), 179.

<sup>260</sup>*Ibid.*, 182.



proposition and stormed out of the convention. Most convention delegates supported the Humphrey compromise because a more liberal proposal could have factionalized the party and jeopardized the election. The crisis subsided when the vice presidential nomination and platform approval took precedence.

As early as May 1964, Johnson had confided in Humphrey that he was the preferred vice presidential candidate but cautioned that it might not be politically feasible. A former mayor of Minneapolis, Humphrey was a liberal Democrat who had supported Truman's divisive pro-civil rights platform in 1948. A staunch supporter of labor, farm subsidies, price supports and civil rights, the Minnesotan, like most of his contemporaries, was also a Cold Warrior. Johnson eventually offered the nomination and Humphrey, with widespread support from convention delegates, readily accepted. He had lobbied actively for the vice presidency and promised unswerving loyalty to Johnson despite the President's "aggravating" and "bizarre" method of selecting a running mate.<sup>261</sup>

The Johnson-Humphrey ticket ran on a platform that touted four years of accomplishments under Kennedy and Johnson. On the domestic front it boasted progress in civil rights, the passage of tax cuts, and inroads against poverty. The platform's strong emphasis on foreign affairs was indicative of Johnson's intention to capitalize on the war and peace issue in the campaign.

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<sup>261</sup>Humphrey, Education Of A Public Man, 299. Humphrey wrote "Johnson had drained every bit of juice out of the nomination, and he had drained a good deal out of me."

The Democrats sought to disarm Goldwater's charges that the Democrats were "soft" on communism by emphasizing recent international successes. Kennedy's resolution of the Cuban missile crisis and Johnson's firm response to the Gulf of Tonkin incidents were cited as examples of the Democrats' determination to challenge the communist threat. The Democrats claimed that, "On the battlefield of the Cold War one engagement after another has been fought and won."<sup>262</sup> The platform also alluded to the potential consequences of perceived Goldwater's recklessness: "One rash act, one thoughtless decision, one unchecked reaction - - and cities could become smouldering ruins and farms parched wasteland. The leadership we offer has already been tested in the crucible of crisis and challenge." Building upon the theme of responsible leadership, the Democrats proclaimed the 1963 Nuclear Test Ban Treaty as the first meaningful step toward controlling the ominous arms race, and as an additional jab at Goldwater, the platform clarified that "Control of the use of nuclear weapons must remain solely with...the President of the United States."<sup>263</sup>

Democratic emphasis on the Gulf of Tonkin affair was also meant to accentuate the differences between Johnson and Goldwater. Between the GOP and Democratic Conventions, on August 2, 1964, three small North Vietnamese torpedo boats attacked the American destroyer Maddox thirty miles

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<sup>262</sup>Kirk H. Porter and Donald Bruce Johnson, ed., National Party Platforms, 1840-1968 (Chicago, 1970), 654.

<sup>263</sup>*Ibid.*, 634-44.

off the North Vietnamese coast in the Gulf of Tonkin. Although the assault appeared entirely unprovoked, the United States had been systematically aiding South Vietnamese commando raids on the North. The Maddox, which had been on a routine intelligence gathering patrol, easily repelled the attack with the assistance of fighter jets launched from the USS Ticonderoga. President Johnson responded to the situation by ordering a second destroyer to the gulf. On August 4 during a severe storm, both U.S. destroyers claimed to have come under renewed attack. Despite mounting evidence that a second attack never actually occurred, the President delivered a national television address to announce his order for limited retaliation bombing against North Vietnam. According to historian George C. Herring, the administration had been "in a mood to retaliate" as Johnson and his advisors feared being perceived as "paper tigers" reluctant to risk an escalation of the war.<sup>264</sup> A Johnson aide later referred to the President's management of the Tonkin crisis as "ideal campaigning."<sup>265</sup>

Barry Goldwater supported the President's "firm action" in response to the Tonkin crisis, but claimed that the North Vietnamese attack had resulted from Johnson's unclear policy objectives. The senator demanded a "new policy" that

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<sup>264</sup>George C. Herring, America's Longest War: The United States And Vietnam, 1950-1975 (New York, 1986), 120-21.

<sup>265</sup>Goldman, The Tragedy Of Lyndon Johnson, 176. George C. Herring criticized Johnson for rallying national support without disclosing the United State's substantive covert activity against the North Vietnamese. See America's Longest War, 122.

was committed to winning the war in Vietnam.<sup>266</sup> Goldwater's critics used the crisis to emphasize the potentially dangerous ramifications of his presidency. They charged that the Arizonan would have over reacted to such an incident and instead of ordering 63 sorties against North Vietnam he would have commanded 630. The New Republic commented that Goldwater prefers "saturating whole cities and regions with old-fashioned nuclear bombs."<sup>267</sup> Actually, the senator supported the level of Johnson's retaliation, saying "we cannot allow the American flag to be shot at."<sup>268</sup> However, on August 8, he still intended to exploit events in Vietnam and proclaimed that the Democratic leadership had failed to "understand communism" and accused it of pursuing peace "at any price."<sup>269</sup> On the same day, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution granting the President broad military authority to intervene in Vietnam. Democrat J. William Fulbright, who had recently become chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, skillfully shepherded the measure's passage. The Gulf of Tonkin crisis enabled Johnson to rally the country behind his leadership and to weaken charges that he lacked adequate experience to conduct foreign policy or that he would tolerate communist

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<sup>266</sup>Goldwater Campaign Speech, Washington D.C., August 10, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume I, p.6, Barry M. Goldwater Collection, Arizona Historical Foundation, Tempe, Arizona; hereafter cited as Goldwater Collection.

<sup>267</sup>New Republic, August 22, 1964, 4.

<sup>268</sup>Goldman, The Tragedy Of Lyndon Johnson, 177.

<sup>269</sup>New York Times, August 7, 1964.

incursions. Historian Stephen E. Ambrose referred to passage of the Tonkin resolution as "the decisive moment in the 1964 election," concluding that the President had "pulled off a political miracle."<sup>270</sup>

Prior to the start of his official campaigning, Goldwater urged more aggressive prosecution of the war in Vietnam "with the object of ending it."<sup>271</sup> He proclaimed that Vietnam symbolized not a minor skirmish but instead a major battlefield in the free-world's struggle against communism. The nation, he claimed, needed to "back up its resolve with whatever manpower, equipment, and weaponry it may take...to stem the Communist advance in Laos and Vietnam."<sup>272</sup> The senator characterized Johnson's cautious Vietnam policy as shameful and contended that the country could not "afford the tragedy of sending our boys into a war we will not permit them to win. Nowhere in the world today is there a clearer road to peace through strength than in Vietnam."<sup>273</sup>

In August, national election polls favored Johnson by 65 to 30 percent, but his opponent demonstrated strength in the South where he led the President 50 to 41 percent. The Christian Science Monitor reported that Goldwater led in

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<sup>270</sup>Stephen E. Ambrose, Nixon: The Triumph of a Politician, 1962-1972 vol. 2, (New York, 1989), 47-58.

<sup>271</sup>Goldwater Collection, Washington D.C., August 10, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume I, p.6.

<sup>272</sup>Barry M. Goldwater, Where I Stand (New York, 1964), 29.

<sup>273</sup>*Ibid.*, 28-29.

nine states in addition to those in the South.<sup>274</sup> Despite Johnson's overwhelming national margin, many political analysts foresaw "a hot contest" because of the candidates' stark contrasting positions and the Arizonan's proven ability to win election upsets.<sup>275</sup>

Vacationing in northern California during early August, Goldwater began to prepare for a campaign strategy meeting with GOP leaders. Goldwater, William E. Miller, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Richard M. Nixon led the one day "unity conference" on August 12 in Hershey, Pennsylvania, which was attended by more than thirty Republican congressmen, senators, governors and gubernatorial candidates. The conference provided Goldwater a forum to clarify his position on controversial campaign issues and to ease concerns of fellow Republican leaders. The objective was clear: unify the splintered party. Eisenhower and Nixon knew that without at least a semblance of party cohesion, victory in November was impossible. Eisenhower opened the proceedings by urging the Republicans to "get our souls bared so that when we go out we can put something together that is worthwhile, that can win." Vice presidential nominee Miller gave a brief opening address. He called for cooperation between local, state and national Republican organizations and outlined the 1964 election strategy as the reaffirmation of the party's commitment to "firmness and strength in foreign affairs and to fiscal

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<sup>274</sup>Newsweek, August 17, 1964, 34, Time, August 7, 1964, 20-21.

<sup>275</sup>U.S. News & World Report, August 3, 1964, 12.

responsibility at home."<sup>276</sup>

In the conference's principal speech, Goldwater confronted the controversial issues of his candidacy: social security, civil rights, and foreign policy extremism. The Arizonan claimed that his position was misunderstood on all of these points. Both Eisenhower and Nixon had approved Goldwater's text in advance, and Ike told the conferees, "I respect it and admire it."<sup>277</sup>

The senator underscored his basic support for the social security program, promised strict adherence to all civil rights legislation, and repudiated all extremist groups that relied on threats or violence. But most of all, he sought to correct what he called "the supreme political lie" that a Goldwater presidency would somehow lead to nuclear war. The senator promised that his election to the White House would signal "an immediate return to the proven policy of peace through strength which was the hallmark of the Eisenhower years."<sup>278</sup>

And, as President he would engage in routine and in-depth consultation with Eisenhower and Nixon on international affairs and related cabinet appointments. Goldwater also reaffirmed his commitment to the NATO alliance and the United Nations, declaring them valuable world peace organizations.

The speech was greeted with vigorous applause.

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<sup>276</sup>Karl Hess, In A Cause That Will Triumph: The Goldwater Campaign and the Future of Conservatism, (New York, 1967), 169, 173. A transcript of the conference is reprinted as an appendix.

<sup>277</sup>*Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>278</sup>Goldwater Collection, Hershey, Pennsylvania, August 12, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume I, p.2.

During an extensive question and answer period following the senator's address, several governors including George W. Romney and Nelson A. Rockefeller warned of the explosiveness of the civil rights issue in major urban areas and of the nominee's lingering image as a warmonger. Goldwater acknowledged the danger of racism as a campaign issue, even saying, "I am scared to death of it....I will lean over backwards to keep from discussing it." Eisenhower instructed the senator to refute his negative image as a militant on a daily basis during the campaign, and Governor William Scranton suggested using extensive television advertising to promote the nominee's actual positions. Arizona governor Paul Fannin instructed the GOP leaders to work hard to place Goldwater's "proper image" before the public. At the end of the conference, much to Goldwater's satisfaction, Maine governor John H. Reed announced, "Senator, I think I want to say you have done an excellent job. You have relieved the reservations that I had and you have my unqualified support."<sup>279</sup>

Speaking at a post conference press gathering, Eisenhower emphasized his support for the Arizonan. He told reporters that he no longer possessed any "uncertainties...as to the fitness, adequacy and quality" of Barry Goldwater and that he was "right on his team."<sup>280</sup> Even Rockefeller appeared genuinely satisfied, admitting that the nominee's prepared statement had been "very close

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<sup>279</sup>Hess, In A Cause That Will Triumph, 206, 217, 224.

<sup>280</sup>Time, August 21, 1964, 13, Newsweek, August 24, 1964, 20.



to traditional Republican principles that reflect a moderate point of view and are in the mainstream of American thought." When some journalists insinuated that Goldwater must have compromised his positions on important issues to rally the GOP leadership, the senator responded that his address had not been expedient or hypocritically conciliatory; rather it "merely, reaffirms what I've been saying throughout the campaign."<sup>281</sup> Leading news magazines covering the Hershey meeting reached contrasting conclusions. Time commented that Goldwater had "skillfully handled a remarkable summit conference,"<sup>282</sup> while Newsweek claimed that his speech had been "nothing less than a series of major concessions to the moderates."<sup>283</sup> Murray Kempton of The New Republic was equally unimpressed by the gathering, stating that "the new Goldwater" only exhibited a change in tone and that the conference "had not changed anything essential."<sup>284</sup> Kempton also noted the absence of several staunch Goldwater critics, including Michigan governor Romney, from the press conference and questioned Eisenhower's new enthusiasm for the ticket. Nonetheless, Goldwater had completed the seemingly obligatory attempt to rally party support for the ticket, and with Ike, Nixon, Scranton and possibly Rockefeller on board, the Hershey conference appeared successful.

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<sup>281</sup>Newsweek, August 24, 1964, 20.

<sup>282</sup>Time, August 21, 1964, 13.

<sup>283</sup>Newsweek, August 24, 1964, 19.

<sup>284</sup>New Republic, August 22, 1964, 4-5.

Given the soundness of the national economy and Goldwater's reluctance to make civil rights a campaign issue, the GOP nominee saw foreign relations as an area of vulnerability for Johnson. Reversing the senator's own "number one problem" of war and peace however, would prove more difficult with the press and the voting public than with party leaders.<sup>285</sup> Modifying his militant image required Goldwater to curtail the jingoistic rhetoric that he had exhibited throughout the primaries. His refusal or inability to do this had even been evident at the Hershey press conference where the senator reaffirmed his advocacy of U.S. interdiction of communist supply lines from North Vietnam. His contention that Johnson had given the navy's Seventh Fleet permission to use tactical nuclear weapons in response to the Gulf of Tonkin crisis was even more controversial. Upon hearing the senator's comments, Johnson had broke sharply from his strategy to ignore Goldwater and arranged an impromptu press conference to rebuke him and deny his charges. The President said, "Loose charges on nuclear weapons...by any candidate for any office, let alone the Presidency, are a disservice to our national security, a great disservice to the entire free world."<sup>286</sup>

Goldwater's unbridled commentary on foreign affairs continued throughout August. Speaking at the Illinois State Fair he chastised the Johnson administration for granting North Vietnam advance warning of the reprisal

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<sup>285</sup>Hess, In A Cause That Will Triumph, 172.

<sup>286</sup>Newsweek, August 24, 1964, 20.

attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin affair and he repeated an earlier criticism that the nation's defense policy was becoming too reliant upon intercontinental missiles rather than manned bombers. Goldwater charged that under Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, America's "deliverable nuclear capacity" would be reduced by 90 percent in the next ten years.<sup>287</sup> He based this projection was based upon the assumption that all Strategic Air Command bombers would be replaced by less accurate Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. He later quipped that the Air Force might soon need "Hertz rent-a-bombers."<sup>288</sup> The Defense Department contested Goldwater's estimates and stressed that its ICBM program was reliable and by the end of the decade would be able to deliver 250 percent more nuclear warheads. Campaign reporters referred to the confusing debate as the "megatonnage gap" with Goldwater talking about inaccurate missile launchers and the Pentagon stressing the cumulative destructive power of its growing missile inventory.<sup>289</sup>

When asked in late August at an informal press gathering what would be the most important issue of the campaign, Goldwater replied, foreign policy. Earlier that week he had spoken at a veterans convention in Cleveland where

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<sup>287</sup>Time, August 28, 1964, 18. In the same speech Goldwater referred to the secretary as "Field Marshall McNamara." In his autobiography with Jack Casserly, Goldwater (New York, 1988), 294, the senator called McNamara "one of the most unreliable and untrustworthy men in America."

<sup>288</sup>Time, September 18, 1964, 32. While discussing missile launcher inaccuracy, Goldwater had once commented that, "I want to lob one into the men's room of the Kremlin and make sure I hit it." See Johnson, The Vantage Point, 102.

<sup>289</sup>New Republic, September 5, 1964, 8. Also see Newsweek, September 24, 1964, 21.

he emphasized the need for a reinvigorated North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He accused Johnson of making the control of nuclear weapons a "partisan political issue" and proceeded to restate his position that under crisis circumstances the Supreme NATO Commander should have authority to use "small conventional nuclear weapons." Goldwater told the veterans that these tactical weapons were "no more powerful than the fire-power you have faced on the battlefield."<sup>290</sup> Responding to questions about the recent Democratic Convention, the senator criticized Johnson's acceptance speech as being "perhaps the most isolationist ever...Not once did he challenge Communism."<sup>291</sup> The Arizonan predicted that Johnson would attempt to capitalize on the war in Vietnam by entering into peace negotiations sometime before election day. He startled reporters by appearing to soften his position on Vietnam when he stated that "talks with the Red Chinese might be profitable." Later, in a more characteristically hard line tone, a GOP press aide assured the reporters that by "talks" with China Goldwater actually meant an ultimatum with possible threats to blow up Chinese bridges if they continued to supply Viet Cong guerrillas. Newsweek reported that the confused journalists were left to grope through the candidate's customary "semantic fog."<sup>292</sup>

Goldwater officially began his campaign on September 3, 1964, from his

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<sup>290</sup>Goldwater Collection, Washington D.C., August 25, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume I, p.3-4.

<sup>291</sup>Newsweek, September 7, 1964, 30.

<sup>292</sup>Ibid.

familiar election launching pad of Prescott, Arizona. Ever cognizant of his militant image, he promised tranquility abroad and referred to "peace" nearly twenty times.<sup>293</sup> He proclaimed, "I do not intend to be a wartime president." The senator lashed out at the President. He renewed his charge that Johnson would use the Vietnam war to rally voter support during a time of national crisis. He pledged that if he were elected his conservative principles would be incorporated into national policy gradually, and that he would honor the country's commitments to social security and other domestic programs. Referring to foreign affairs, he warned voters, "Choose the way of this present Administration, you choose the way of unilateral disarmament and appeasement." By contrast, a Goldwater presidency offered:

Peace through preparedness. Progress through freedom. Purpose through constitutional order. Peace is basic to the differences between the two parties. Johnson does not comprehend the nature of the enemy who threatens the peace, or the nature of the conflict which...has been imposed upon the entire world. Some distort that we are preoccupied with war. There is no greater political lie. We are preoccupied with peace. And we are fearful that this Administration is letting the peace slip away, as it has slipped three times since 1914, by pretending that there are no threats to it.

This Administration, which inherited the mightiest arsenal for the defense of freedom ever created on earth, is...dismantling it...Republicans will end the draft altogether, and as soon as possible. To use military services for political and social schemes—as this Administration does—is to drift closer to war on an ebbing tide of military strength. We have simply got to put this record straight, and all of us must understand it. The Republican Party is the peace party. We seek a strong America because only a strong nation can keep the peace. I do not intend to be a wartime President. I promise an Administration that will keep the peace—and keep faith with freedom at the same time. The Republican Party, this party of peace through strength, has no clearer message. Peace has no greater hope.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>293</sup>Goldwater Collection, Prescott, AZ, September 3, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume I, p.1-5. (U.S. New & World Report reprinted the entire speech on September 14, 1964).

<sup>294</sup>Goldwater Collection, Prescott, AZ, September 3, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume II, p.3-5.

Goldwater also promised to end the "outmoded and unfair" military draft system, which he later claimed "discriminates grossly against many of the poor and less well-educated."<sup>295</sup> His supporters were energized by the speech, which appeared to effectively refute all of the negative charges, including the "trigger happy" label, that had been hung on to their candidate. In his 1988 autobiography, Goldwater referred to the Prescott speech as his "finest hour."<sup>296</sup> Even the liberal Nation grudgingly backed Goldwater's proposal to end the draft: "Not even Goldwater can be wrong all the time."<sup>297</sup> But the magazine's editors remained unconvinced of the Republican's peace overtures and concluded that "on nuclear weapons alone any sensible voter will prefer Johnson to a thinly disguised jingo like Goldwater."<sup>298</sup>

Two days later, William Miller opened his campaign in New York with a blistering attack on Hubert Humphrey. Miller challenged the Democrat's Cold War credentials by charging that Humphrey favored formal recognition of the People's Republic of China and friendlier relations with Castro's Cuba. Senate Foreign Relations Chairman William Fulbright came to Humphrey's defense and characterized Miller as being full of "foul-mouthed vituperation." Miller in turn called Fulbright an "apostle of retreat" and an "advocate of

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<sup>295</sup>Ibid., p.4. and Goldwater Collection, Dallas, TX, September 23, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume II, p.6.

<sup>296</sup>Casserly and Goldwater, Goldwater, 120.

<sup>297</sup>Nation, September 21, 1964, 104.

<sup>298</sup>Ibid., September 7, 1964, 81.

accommodation who spews forth venomous predictions."<sup>299</sup> Humphrey ignored Miller's barbs during the campaign and instead swung straight for Goldwater. He told voters, "The question before the electorate is simple, prophetic, profound - - which of these men...do you want to have his hand on the nuclear trigger?"<sup>300</sup>

President Johnson, "filled with confidence," opened his campaign on September 7 in Detroit. He discussed the nation's domestic agenda and ignored specific policies abroad. He reassured voters that his administration represented peace, preparedness and prosperity. Johnson purposely avoided mentioning Goldwater by name, but alluded to the negative image of his opponent, saying, "This country is not going to turn from unity to hostility, from understanding to hate."<sup>301</sup> Like Goldwater's primary election opponents, the President sought to capitalize on the voters' fears of war. One week later LBJ attacked "extremists" who "demand that you choose a doctrine alien to America - - a doctrine that would lead to a tragic convulsion in foreign relations."<sup>302</sup>

The Democratic strategy to impugn Goldwater was dramatically revealed in two national television advertisements sponsored by the Democratic

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<sup>299</sup>Time, September 18, 1964, 32.

<sup>300</sup>Ibid., September 25, 1964, 16.

<sup>301</sup>Ibid., September 18, 1964, 30.

<sup>302</sup>Ibid.

National Committee.<sup>303</sup> The first, broadcast on September 7, depicted a small girl in a field picking pedals off of a daisy. As the girl counted each pedal, a man's voice began counting backwards from ten to zero. When the man reached zero, the scene changed to an explosion of a nuclear bomb and Johnson's voice was heard saying, "These are the stakes. To make a world in which all of God's children can live, or go into the dark. We must either love each other, or we must die." An announcer's voice followed to encourage viewers to vote for Johnson: "The stakes are too high for you to stay home."<sup>304</sup> An equally disturbing second advertisement aired five days later and targeted Goldwater's 1963 senate vote against the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The ad pictured another small girl eating an ice cream cone with a woman's voice reminding viewers that radioactive fallout killed children and that if Goldwater were elected he might restart atmospheric testing. "Vicious?" asked Time magazine, "Of course. But the very fact that such commercials are being used speaks mouthfuls about what now stands as the decisive issue of the 1964 presidential campaign - - the argument over control of nuclear weaponry."<sup>305</sup> In his book The People Machine, Robert MacNeil characterized the advertising

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<sup>303</sup>Presidential aide Bill Moyers and the advertising firm Doyle, Dane Bernbach were largely responsible for the television spots. Goldwater's displeasure over the ads was long lasting. In his 1988 autobiography he noted that even the thought of Moyers still "makes me sick."

<sup>304</sup>Bernard Rubin, Political Television (Belmont, CA, 1967), 186.

<sup>305</sup>Time, September 25, 1964, 16. Interviewed for the 1988 Goldwater autobiography, the Washington Post's Ben Bradlee recalled his impression of the advertisements, they were "a fucking outrage. I was outraged."



campaign as a "viciously clever attempt to keep alive doubts that had been an issue all year, of Goldwater's trust worthiness with the nation's nuclear arsenal."<sup>306</sup> MacNeil called the television spots "scurrilous," but also credited a host of Goldwater's Republican and Democratic critics with the formation of his image as a "trigger-happy cowboy...ready to 'shoot from the hip'."<sup>307</sup>

The two Democratic television advertisements were broadcasted once and each lasted less than five minutes, but they effectively repelled Goldwater's early attempt to capture or at least control the peace issue. The advertisement's striking visuals tied the specter of nuclear holocaust to a Goldwater presidency. The ads sparked press inquiry over the genesis of the war-peace issue and resulted in harsh criticism of both candidates. Time attacked Johnson for not acknowledging that U.S. defense policy since the Eisenhower administration had provided nuclear weapons authority to the Supreme NATO Commander under certain circumstances. The magazine blasted Goldwater for his "appalling ignorance" surrounding the ramifications of limited nuclear engagements and for downplaying the tremendously destructive impact of tactical nuclear weapons.<sup>308</sup> Despite his early attempts to control the war-peace issue, Goldwater had been quickly relegated to his familiar defensive posture on the most controversial issue of the campaign. This was a perilous

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<sup>306</sup>Robert MacNeil, The People Machine: The Influence of Television on American Politics (New York, 1968), 205.

<sup>307</sup>Ibid.

<sup>308</sup>Time, September 25, 1964, 15-19.

position for an underdog candidate attempting to depose a powerful incumbent.

Campaigning on the west coast, Goldwater discussed domestic issues including a call for a twenty-five percent reduction in income taxes over a five-year period. He also railed against corruption in the nation's capital and against urban crime, but he kept foreign affairs in the forefront by declaring communism "the only substantial threat to the peace in the entire world" and by attacking the Kennedy administration's Cuba policy and linking it to Johnson and the war in Vietnam:

The Bay of Pigs was a shock and a shame...the [Cuban] missile crisis?...it proved that an Administration which long had planned on the basis that the Soviet never would move missiles into this hemisphere, was dead and dangerously wrong.

And it proved that despite weeks, and months, of warning about the missiles, an Administration totally political in its goals and instincts could and would wait until the perilous last moment to take action...at a time that would have maximum domestic political impact...[this] offers a future warning.

Americans must be prepared under such an Administration to be faced by crisis of some sort just before an election.

What will it be this time? Was the so-called crisis in the Gulf of Tonkin a hint of things to come? It should be a warning as well.

The peace of the world may be dying there, along with respect for America, which is an important part of our ability to keep the peace. Vietnam, however, to hear this Administration talk, is not an issue...this Administration won't admit that what it has on its hand is a war. Beyond that, its leader won't admit that Communism is the cause of that war...And you will reject the men who talk of peace but lack the strength to keep it.<sup>309</sup>

Throughout much of September, Goldwater clung to Vietnam as a major stump issue. He referred to it as "Lyndon Johnson's War" and characterized

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<sup>309</sup>Goldwater Collection, Seattle, Washington, September 9, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume II, p.4-6.

U.S. policy as weak, indecisive, and directionless.<sup>310</sup> He devoted two speeches almost exclusively to Vietnam. First in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, he claimed that the Johnson administration had been "struck deaf, dumb and blind by the mounting crisis in Vietnam...a war in which Americans are dying."<sup>311</sup> Goldwater demanded that the administration inform the public about why the U.S. military was in Southeast Asia and what its objectives were. Ten days later while campaigning in Louisville, Kentucky, the senator charged the Democratic Party with administering a foreign policy of unwitting appeasement that had resulted in three wars during the twentieth century. He began referring to Johnson as "the interim President" and claimed that the Vietnam War was a result of LBJ's weak and confusing leadership. The senator asked his audiences if there had ever been "a more mishandled conflict in American history than Lyndon Johnson's war in Asia."<sup>312</sup>

In response to his opponent's attack, the President unveiled his oft repeated peace theme by pledging to "go to any remote corner of the world to meet anyone, any time, to promote freedom and to promote peace."<sup>313</sup>

Johnson did not talk much about Vietnam specifically, but when he did, he

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<sup>310</sup>Goldwater Collection, Louisville, KY, September 25, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume II, p.2.

<sup>311</sup>Goldwater Collection, Winston-Salem, N.C., September 15, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume II, p.1.

<sup>312</sup>Goldwater Collection, Louisville, KY, September 25, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume II, p.1.

<sup>313</sup>Goldman, The Tragedy Of Lyndon Johnson, 224.

promised to maintain the anti-communist position established by his predecessors without enlarging the war. The President warned that a military escalation would, "result in our committing a good many American boys to fighting a war that I think ought to be fought by the boys of Asia to help protect their own land."<sup>314</sup>

During a fourteen-city tour of the South, Goldwater emphasized the domestic themes he had honed during his years as the Senate reelection chairman. He denounced corruption, violence, welfare, and the large federal government as products of political liberalism. In Florida, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas, his speeches became more reassuring and cautious and cited the importance of "national unity, the good life, peace and nuclear responsibility."<sup>315</sup> His ongoing attempt to control the peace issue was clearly evident by his new critique of those who supported unlimited bombing of North Vietnam, and he promised not to frighten others into World War III. Journalists reported on Goldwater's "warm reception" in the South and frequently noted that he was routinely outdrawing the touring rock-and-roll band, The Beatles.

On September 18, Goldwater delivered a thirty minute national television speech addressing the importance of foreign policy in the election. He criticized Johnson for refusing to "speak plainly" on international affairs and

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<sup>314</sup>Ibid., 234-35.

<sup>315</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 175.

declared that "weakness and indecision and appeasement" in presidential leadership risked full scale war. Goldwater declared "I want no part of war" and that "I do not intend to be a wartime President...I know its ravages, its horror, its destruction." As he would do often during the campaign, Goldwater compared his warmonger image to that of Prime Minister Winston Churchill who had the courage to challenge Britain's appeasement policy in 1938. He characterized communism as a school yard bully and demanded that the United States "Just stand up to him...just draw the line on his aggression...he'll back down." In response to charges that he had concentrated too much on foreign affairs during the campaign, Goldwater said, "I do not apologize for this—I insist upon it....If my opponents choose to misconstrue my words and my concern, for their own short-range political gain—then so be it...these things are far more important and of infinitely more value than the political fortune of any man seeking high office."<sup>316</sup> During the next week, Goldwater described Johnson's conduct of foreign relations as "dream world diplomacy" that encouraged communist aggression, and he renewed his demand for a presidential debate to highlight the candidates' differences in "the major issue in this campaign," foreign policy leadership.<sup>317</sup>

September polling data confirmed Goldwater's belief that war and peace

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<sup>316</sup>Goldwater Collection, Nationwide Television Address, September 18, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume II, p.1-8.

<sup>317</sup>Goldwater Collection, Midland-Odessa, TX, September 22, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume II, p.1-6.

had become the number one campaign issue.<sup>318</sup> But despite the Arizonan's stalwart campaigning, Newsweek reported that Johnson still maintained a 30 point lead in national polls and that he had made crucial gains in the South where the candidates were now running neck-in-neck.<sup>319</sup>

On September 28, Goldwater began a five day, thirty-three city, train tour through the upper Midwest, including stops in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. In Athens, Ohio, he reiterated the need for military strength during a time of peace and claimed, "The surest way to get into a war in this world is to become a weak country....read your history...every time we go to war the Democrats are in power." Later while in Chillicothe, Ohio, Goldwater repeated his attack on Johnson for not debating the issues, saying the President was "never around the White House enough to find him. If Khrushchev calls on that hot line, some beagle is going to answer." In Cincinnati, with fiery rhetoric, he accused the administration of being "soft on Communism" with a foreign policy of "drift, deception and defeat." He complained that Johnson refused to debate foreign relations because it was politically risky. Regarding Vietnam, the Republican asked "Why does he put off facing the question of what to do about Vietnam? Does he hope that he can wait until after the election to confront the American public with the facts of total defeat or total war in

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<sup>318</sup>Time, September 25, 1964, 15-19.

<sup>319</sup>Newsweek, September, 28, 1964, 25-26.

Asia?"<sup>320</sup> As if reminded of his militant image while in Columbus, Goldwater warned of the dangers of a prolonged war in Vietnam and omitted his frequent call for "victory"; instead, he declared "I am a peacemonger" and called for an end to the conflict and stated that there was no easy solution.<sup>321</sup>

In Crown Point-Hammond, Indiana, Goldwater compared the current election to that of 1952, when "the basic issue was to pick a man who could best protect our peace and security." While he drew several valid comparisons to the previous election, including the dangers of nuclear proliferation and land wars in Asia, the Republican's militant rhetoric was hardly reassuring: "The real question in this campaign is not who is 'trigger happy' or who will 'press the button'...The United States will never start any war...In all likelihood, the President...and the Vice-President would not be around at all to push the button. It would be too late for button-pushing...if they ever should push the button, we would destroy them."<sup>322</sup>

During September and October, large and receptive crowds greeted President Johnson across New England and the Midwest and in large southern cities. The size and enthusiasm of his audiences seemed to reinforce polls forecasting a Democratic victory of massive proportions. Johnson, a master

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<sup>320</sup>Goldwater Collection, Cincinnati, OH, September 29, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume II, p.1, 5.

<sup>321</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 186, 189, 193, 195.

<sup>322</sup>Goldwater Collection, Crown Point-Hammond, IN, October 1, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume III, p.1-5.

politician, left nothing to chance. He campaigned vigorously, frequently assailing his opponent. He referred to Goldwater as a "raving, ranting demagogue" and told his followers that "I admire a brave man, but some people have more guts than brains."<sup>323</sup>

Goldwater continued to crisscross the nation with stops in New Jersey, Texas, California and Utah. On October 6, he stressed that the relevance of the Cold War to the election saying, "This is a live issue, a real issue, and a deeply significant issue." He condemned Johnson for his "fraudulent attack" regarding NATO's control of nuclear weapons, and he told voters that they had a choice between "reacting to Communism...or seeking initiatives."<sup>324</sup> Three days later, the Republican nominee received badly needed support from Richard Nixon, who during a television address defended Goldwater's position on NATO's control of nuclear weapons as a policy that was started by Eisenhower and continued by President Kennedy.<sup>325</sup> Nixon called upon Johnson to apologize to the senator, who Nixon described as "a reasonable...calm...patriotic man."<sup>326</sup> Goldwater also received the support of President Eisenhower, who delivered a foreign policy speech in Columbus, Ohio. Ike expressed his

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<sup>323</sup>Goldman, The Tragedy Of Lyndon Johnson, 229, 234.

<sup>324</sup>Goldwater Collection, Washington, D.C., October 6, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume III, p.6-7.

<sup>325</sup>Ambrose, Nixon vol. II, 47-58.

<sup>326</sup>Goldwater Collection, Richard M. Nixon National Television Address, October 9, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume III, p.4.



concern for the "harsh problems of national security" and asked voters to be "immune to the techniques of promise-peddling and panic-mongering." He described the Democratic Party's charges of Republican extremism as "Tommy Rot!"<sup>327</sup> In an attempt to revive a foreign policy strategy reminiscent of the 1952 presidential election, Goldwater promised to send Eisenhower to Southeast Asia to help design a more effective policy. He stated that the U.S. would never engage in nuclear warfare with the Soviet Union; "neither of us would be that stupid."<sup>328</sup>

An October New York Times survey indicated that Johnson held commanding leads in seventeen states with another fourteen "leaning."<sup>329</sup> Goldwater supposedly held two states with eight leaning, thus leaving nine states uncommitted. But the Johnson campaign was gathering momentum in the Midwest and, "The oftener Senator Goldwater used his hard line about 'victory' over Communism, the oftener the President spoke of prudence."<sup>330</sup>

Three weeks before election day, the weary Goldwater staff received a momentary boost. Despite efforts by the White House to suppress the story, news spread that a long time Johnson adviser and confidant, Walter Jenkins, had been arrested in Washington for homosexual activity in a public facility.

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<sup>327</sup>Goldwater Collection, Eisenhower Speech in Columbus, OH, October 12, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume III, p.2, 6.

<sup>328</sup>New York Times, October 13, 1964.

<sup>329</sup>*ibid.*, October 6, 1964.

<sup>330</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 207.

Goldwater resisted the temptation to comment on the Jenkins affair specifically. He had however been speaking out against the country's decaying morality under Democratic leadership, and the Jenkins arrest allowed him to establish a link between mores and the White House.<sup>331</sup> Unfortunately for the Republicans, turbulent world affairs quickly overshadowed the Jenkins case and renewed the specter of nuclear war.

On October 15, Nikita Khrushchev fell from power in the Soviet Union, and on the following day, the People's Republic of China exploded its first nuclear bomb. These events seized the country's attention and presented the candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate leadership during a time of international crisis. In a prime time television address, Johnson delivered "one of the most effective speeches politically of recent time."<sup>332</sup> The President, who had recently decided to emphasize foreign policy in the campaign, appeared firm against communism but resolute in keeping peace. He acknowledged concern for the "dangerous communists" who had threatened war in Cuba and Berlin, but he also referred to their "good sense and sober judgement" in support of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. In response to China's nuclear achievement, Johnson reaffirmed the United State's "defense commitments in Asia," warned against nuclear proliferation, and called on China to sign the test ban treaty. America's objective, he said, is "peace for all

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<sup>331</sup>Goldwater refused to broadcast an anti-Johnson film depicting the decline in the nation's morality. See his book Goldwater, 260.

<sup>332</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 209.

men."<sup>333</sup> Johnson aide Eric F. Goldman commented that the President "stroved to sound like, what he wanted so much to be, the wise, benevolent father to the nation."<sup>334</sup>

In a televised speech entitled "Soviet Shift And U.S. Policy," Goldwater responded to the world events on October 21. He warned the nation that the international situation reflected ever increasing dangers: "the Communist threat to our security has become more grave." He foresaw Sino-Soviet rapprochement as a shift toward "a more unified Communist movement." Referencing Khrushchev's 1957 cry to "bury us" three times, he attacked the administration's belief in "good" and "bad" communists and called Johnson's foreign policy an "utter failure." The simplicity of the senator's outlook was reflected in his discussion of Sino-Soviet rapprochement: "They were quarreling over who would be the big boss of the entire Communist movement and what would be the best way to bury us...[Johnson's] mistake of trying to distinguish different kinds of Communism...ignored the fact that all Communist agree on the same goal...a Communist dominated world." Goldwater offered three foreign policy solutions: rebuild NATO; recognize communism as our enemy; and confront it with a "firm policy of resistance." His message had remained consistent, one of peace through demonstrative strength. He closed the speech

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<sup>333</sup>Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., History of American Presidential Elections, 1789-1968, IV:3691, 3693-94.

<sup>334</sup>Goldman, The Tragedy Of Lyndon Johnson, 253.

by promising "I will lead you back to sanity in our foreign relations."<sup>335</sup>

The Arizonan traveled extensively during the last weeks of the campaign. With a few exceptions the campaign ended much like it had started in New Hampshire, with speeches to crowds in small towns such as Lewistown, Huntingdon and Altoona, Pennsylvania. On some occasions his enthusiasm had diminished, leading reporter Charles McDowell to comment that he dealt with crowds "like a man keeping appointments with strangers." This was in stark contrast with Johnson, who "charged at them, embraced them, cajoled and lectured them."<sup>336</sup> In late October Johnson began to tell his crowds, "It just won't do for my opponent and Red China to have atomic bombs at the same time."<sup>337</sup> Despite a consensus among pollsters that Johnson would win in a landslide, Goldwater still predicted a Republican victory predicated upon the wishes of a majority of conservative voters who agreed with him on the essential issues.<sup>338</sup> During an October 31 stop in Las Vegas, reporters noted that local handicappers made Goldwater an eight to one underdog to win the election.

Barry Goldwater made his final appeal from San Francisco on November

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<sup>335</sup>Goldwater Collection, National Television Address, October 21, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume III, p.1-9.

<sup>336</sup>McDowell, Campaign Fever, 230.

<sup>337</sup>Goldman, The Tragedy Of Lyndon Johnson, 252.

<sup>338</sup>On October 27, 1964, actor Ronald W. Reagan gave a thirty minute televised speech called "A Time For Choosing." Many observers, including Goldwater, considered the oratory the best speech given in the entire campaign. See Goldwater, 266.

2. As a demonstration of his honesty and clarity of vision, he delivered the identical speech that he had given in Prescott two months earlier. He ended with a final promise, "no matter the cost...I will give you an honest Administration...I will tell you the truth."<sup>339</sup> Voters went to the polls the next day and provided Lyndon Johnson one of the most decisive presidential victories in American history. The New York Times headline read: "JOHNSON SWAMPS GOLDWATER."<sup>340</sup> The Democrat received 43.1 million popular votes and 486 electoral votes compared to 27.1 million popular and 52 electoral votes for Goldwater. The maverick senator had managed victories in only six states: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, and Arizona - - the latter by less than 5,000 votes.

Three major factors had contributed to Lyndon Johnson's sweeping victory. The first was related to the nation's political and economic circumstances. Campaigns for the presidency had begun in earnest within just months of the tragic Kennedy assassination and voters responded favorably to Johnson's unifying leadership. The incumbent also benefitted from America's domestic prosperity as the economy expanded by nearly 13 percent from 1962 to 1964. Johnson's election success was also dependent on his political expertise. Throughout 1964 he drew upon his vast congressional experience and championed popular legislation. Furthermore, as a veteran of countless

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<sup>339</sup>Goldwater Collection, San Francisco, CA, November 2, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume III, p.8.

<sup>340</sup>New York Times, September 4, 1964.

reelection campaigns, he implemented a flawless election strategy designed to contrast his inclusive domestic agenda and cautious foreign policy to the "extremist" ideology of his opponent. The final major element of LBJ's election victory was related to Goldwater inability to reverse or at least control his image as a warmonger. The nation's prosperity had overshadowed the vitality of the senator's crusade against big government, and while his concern for corruption in Washington and declining morality did resonate with many voters, the critical issue of leadership in defense and foreign relations doomed his bid for the White House.

## EPILOGUE

Domestic well-being has been a preeminent concern of most American voters, but World War II and the ensuing war against communism abroad increased the general importance of foreign policy considerations in American presidential elections. By the mid-1960s, nearly two decades after the origin of the Cold War, anti-communist ideology continued to dominate foreign affairs issues in presidential politics. Excluding third party candidate Henry Wallace, every major presidential nominee advocated the militant containment of international communism. In 1948 and 1956, when national elections coincided with international crises, voters rallied behind their incumbent presidents. Under these circumstances, the opposing major party candidates were reluctant to seriously challenge the incumbent on foreign relations because it was politically infeasible, and because they shared the presidents' anti-communist perspective. There were two post-World War II elections that did not involve incumbent candidates. First in 1952, when the final decisive issue of the campaign became the Korean War, a majority of voters backed a proven foreign affairs leader, General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Then in 1960, when neither candidate displayed a clear leadership advantage in foreign relations, voters were deeply divided, contributing to an extremely close

election.

Although these four postwar elections possessed some unique foreign policy issues, each major party candidate actively supported the crux of the containment strategy. The role of foreign affairs leadership as a decisive issue in presidential elections had two primary considerations for voters. The candidates needed to offer an appropriate balance between a willingness to use military force against the spread of communism and the prudent judgement necessary to decide when that force was justified. From 1948 to 1964, voters never doubted the various candidates' *willingness* to wage the Cold War; therefore, the issue of *prudent judgement* became the more important factor. This foreign policy benchmark was most evident in the 1964 presidential election.

In January 1964, Republican Barry Goldwater officially announced his candidacy for president because no other candidate advocated more vigorous action against communism abroad and a smaller federal government at home. His staunch political convictions were derived from his experience as a successful businessman, military officer, and civic leader. Arizona voters had rewarded Goldwater's outspoken support of conservative principles by electing him their U.S. senator in 1952 and 1958. While in Congress, his unyielding faith in conservatism set him apart from his peers, and by his own admission, he labored in the minority wing of the minority party. Although generally supportive of GOP initiatives, Goldwater did not hesitate to condemn fellow Republicans for supporting liberal causes. His activities on several prominent



Senate committees gained him national recognition as a leader of the burgeoning conservative movement, and by 1963, he had become a legitimate candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. The Arizonan captured the nomination in Kennedy-like manner by cultivating party delegates long before the national convention. But Goldwater's path to the nomination proved more difficult as liberal and moderate Republican's stubbornly resisted his unswerving positions on domestic and foreign affairs. No previous candidate's bid for the White House fared so badly at the hands of his own party.

Notwithstanding the GOP infighting, Lyndon Johnson would have defeated any opposing nominee in the 1964 election as he benefitted from the immense advantages of an incumbent seeking reelection. Like Eisenhower eight years earlier, LBJ led the nation during a time of general economic prosperity and he had demonstrated an acceptable balance of force and restraint in the Cold War. A brilliant politician and campaigner, the Texan also benefitted from the unique atmosphere of national sympathy and unity that followed the assassination of a widely popular president. A review of polling data throughout 1964 indicates that Johnson's ability to win the presidency in his own right was never in serious jeopardy.<sup>341</sup> Even Goldwater later admitted that he would have lost the election "even if Abraham Lincoln had come back and campaigned with us."<sup>342</sup> Nonetheless, a Democratic landslide was not

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<sup>341</sup>Bruce E. Altschuler, LBJ and the Polls (Gainesville, FL: 1990), 1-16.

<sup>342</sup>Barry M. Goldwater and Jack Casserly, Goldwater (New York, 1988), 144.

inevitable. Johnson's spectacular margin of victory was in large part derived from the public's decisive perception of Goldwater as an impulsive radical who wanted to end federal programs such as social security and who would senselessly risk nuclear confrontation in the Cold War.

New York governor Nelson Rockefeller had initiated the assault on Goldwater during the 1964 Republican primary elections. His strategy was to dramatize the Arizonan's image as a fringe candidate, who only possessed the marginal support of right wing radicals. He characterized the senator as a militant cowboy from a sparsely populated Western state whose domestic policies were outdated and whose foreign policies were dangerous. During the primaries, Rockefeller and other Republicans convinced many voters that a Goldwater presidency would lead to full scale war in Vietnam and possibly nuclear confrontation with the People's Republic of China or the Soviet Union.

Barry Goldwater's image as a fervent anti-communist was not a caricature created solely by political opponents. As a U.S. senator, Goldwater had developed, documented and campaigned for a brinkmanship-like diplomacy that became synonymous with his presidential candidacy. When he emerged as a legitimate candidate, he could not retreat from his zealous militancy, nor did he wish to. The product of an authentic grass roots movement, Goldwater organized and ran for the presidency strictly on his own terms with an uncompromising dedication to his conservative ideology. Johnson aide George Reedy had characterized the Republican's 1964 campaign as a "sacred

mission."<sup>343</sup>

During the preceding presidential election, Nixon's and Kennedy's foreign policy platforms had been almost indistinguishable. Each called for victory in the Cold War and accused the other of being impulsive and trigger-happy, but neither convinced the public that his opponent would implement a particularly dangerous or risky foreign policy. The 1960 election proved to be one of the closest contests in the history of presidential politics. By contrast, four years later only one candidate demanded victory over communism, and he alone was accused of being impulsive and trigger-happy. The 1962 Cuban missile crisis had demonstrated the frightening consequences of atomic diplomacy, and American voters came to fear Goldwater's continued advocacy of nuclear brinkmanship.

As early as October 1963, even before Kennedy's assassination, political pundits had forecast that war and peace would be the key issue during the 1964 presidential election and after his nomination in San Francisco, Goldwater admitted to GOP leaders that his negative image regarding foreign affairs had become his "number one problem."<sup>344</sup> Consequently, the senator's campaign speeches were designed to clarify his peace through strength position. By September, polling data confirmed that leadership in foreign affairs

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<sup>343</sup>Ibid., 160.

<sup>344</sup>Goldwater Speech, Hershey, Pennsylvania, August 12, 1964, Barry Goldwater Campaign Speeches Volume I, p.2, Barry M. Goldwater Collection, Arizona Historical Foundation, Tempe, Arizona.

had become the most important issue to voters. But, the issue of foreign policy was like quicksand to Goldwater, and the more he worked to reverse his image, the worse it seemed to become. When asked three weeks before the election what had been the most damaging issue during the campaign, he cited "the repetition of the outright lie... 'the trigger-happy'... 'nuclear thing'." The 1964 election ended in one of the most decisive defeats ever. Ironically, Johnson, as the peace candidate, was unbeatable in 1964, but his militant policy in Vietnam ruined his chances for reelection four years later.

In the context of U.S. presidential politics, Barry Goldwater will be remembered first for the striking margin of his defeat in the 1964 election. However, the potentially greater significance of his candidacy may lie in the many influential precedents set by his campaign. Goldwater was the first modern conservative to win a major party nomination, and his campaign broadened national support for conservative policies and weakened Democratic dominance in the Deep South. The Arizonan's grass roots popularity led to a breadth of campaign contributors that surpassed any other previous presidential candidate. His campaign also established new and lasting issues of morality, urban crime and nuclear weapons policy. And while many observers interpreted Goldwater's loss as a devastating defeat for Republicans, during the course of future elections the party reaped many benefits from the popular conservative movement in 1964. The Republicans went on to win the presidency in 1968 and 1972, and only four elections after Goldwater's run,

with a more polished and timely nominee, GOP conservatives captured the White House on an all too familiar platform calling for an end to big government and for the defeat of international communism.

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