

WXPast
Goldwater Critical of Nixon

DEC 19 1973

'Loner' Has Lost Voters' Trust, He Says

President Nixon is an isolated loner who has lost the trust and confidence of the voters and has failed to provide the American people with the domestic leadership they need.

So says Sen. Barry Goldwater of Arizona, one of the Republican Party's most prominent conservatives and the party's presidential standard bearer in 1964.

In an interview with Godfrey Sperling Jr., chief of the Christian Science Monitor's Washington bureau, Goldwater said the President's "Operation Candor" has backfired because of the 18-minute gap on the tapes. But Goldwater said that Mr. Nixon's problems are deeper than Watergate.

"I don't think it's Watergate, frankly, as much as it's just a question in people's

mind of just how honest is this man?" Goldwater said. "I hate to think of the old adage, 'Would you buy a used car from Dick Nixon?' but that's what people are asking around the country."

Goldwater said that presidential counselors Melvin Laird and Bryce Harlow are leaving because Mr. Nixon wouldn't listen to them. He said the President, "being a loner . . . sits by himself and tells himself what he's going to do"

The President's efforts to answer accusations in the Watergate case have been too little and too late, Goldwater believes.

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know was the truth," Goldwater said.

Following is the text of the Sperling interview with Goldwater:

Q: Last April, as you know, you called upon the President to break his silence and to speak out and to clear up Watergate. And you said that it smelled like Teapot Dome, and your comments caused a good deal of talk around the country. Now more than eight months have gone by. How would you now assess Mr. Nixon's track record in responding to your plea to get this over with once and for all and get back to governing the nation?

A: From the reports we see in the newspapers the last several days, I think he's finally taken most of the advice I gave him back in April. I think had he taken the advice then and said in effect to the committee and whoever was investigating, "Come on in, and I'll give you everything you want," I think Watergate would have been history by now and Mr. Nixon would be way back up on the popularity poll by now, but he didn't do that.

He chose to dabble and dabble and argue on very nebulous grounds like executive privilege and confidentiality, when all the American people wanted to know was the truth.

Now I think it has come to one hell of a pass when a President of the United States has to lay bare all of his income-tax records, his income records, his holdings, etc.

This is the first time I think in history that's happened. I'd like to wonder what would have happened if Lydon Johnson had been asked to explain how he became a millionaire 40 times over while he served in Washington.

I mean, I'm not begrudging the man the money that he made, but if Mr. Nixon is guilty . . . you didn't ask that question and that's beside

the point. I think that only time is going to tell whether or not Mr. Nixon can climb back up that ladder. And I would say that he can't say this morning whether or not he's even started back up it.

Q: Is it possible he may have Watergate on his back for the next three years and that this will impede him terribly in terms of governing the nation?

A: I don't think it's Watergate, frankly, as much as it's just a question in people's mind of just how honest is this man? I hate to think of the adage "Would you buy a used car from Dick Nixon?" but that's what people are asking around the country.

Q: You get around the country, don't you?

A: I get around the country as much as any Republican, in fact, too much, I guess. I find that the people are divided. There are those people who want him out, period. Now in that group you'll find the former McGovern peoples you'll find the Gardner people; you'll find the Meany people . . . people who would be opposed to a conservative Republican President regardless.

And you have in that same group Republicans, and I'll say not a small number, who say we have to have a new President.

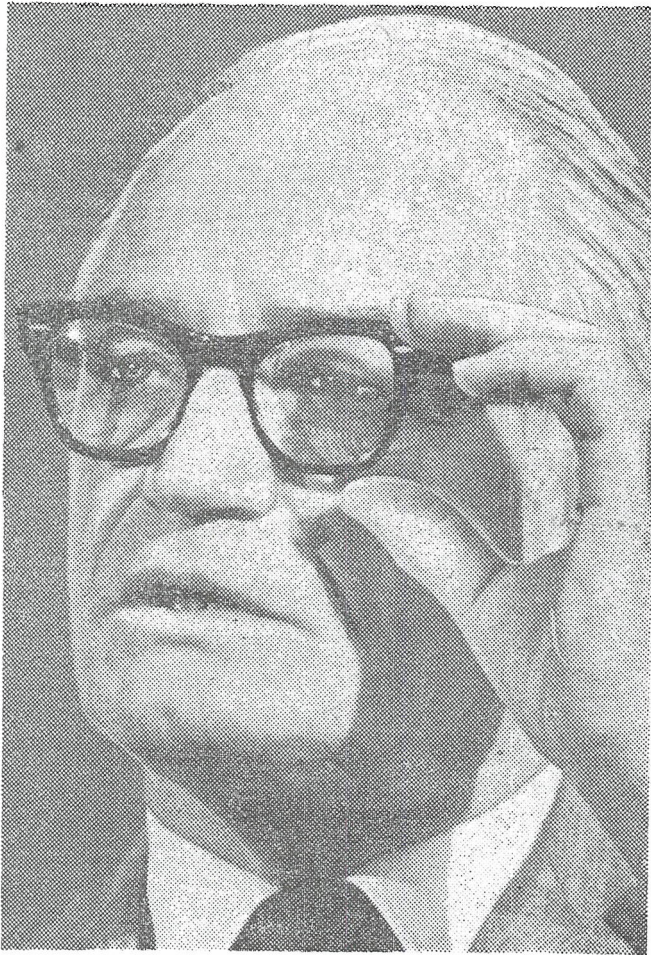
Then you have on the other side the group of people who say, "Well, he's not going to be impeached, he's not going to resign—he's our President. I'm going to stay behind him." They're not in love with the President. But they have so much respect for the office, they don't want to see it damaged.

And then in that same group you have those people who would be for the President regardless of what he did.

Q: Why do you think the President has been so slow in responding to this kind of advice you were giving him last spring? Does this have to do with his own personal assessment of what should be done? Why is he dragging his feet? Has his advice been bad? What would you say on this?

A: Well, I would say what I've been saying all along . . . I've never known a man to be such a loner in any field . . . business, profession, politics, or what . . . I can't sit here and tell you who his advisers are. I know that Mel Laird has quit mainly because the President won't listen to him. Bryce Harlow is reportedly quitting for the same reason.

Now I can't believe, with all due respect to General Haig—he's one of the most brilliant men I've run into—that Nixon would listen to General Haig on political matters when General Haig doesn't know anything about political matters. So I'd . . .



United Press International

Goldwater: "He (Nixon) chose to dabble and dabble . . ."

Q: Is it possible he might be listening to General Haig and Ziegler?

A: I just can't believe he would listen to Ziegler. That in my opinion would be something disastrous. Again there is nothing personal, but Ziegler doesn't understand politics.

The President, I think, thinks of himself as the supreme politician in this country. And being a loner, I think he sits by himself and tells himself what he's going to do. Now we went through this gesture period of having congressmen and senators down to see him—but it seems to have ended. And this is what I was afraid of—that it would be a one-pitch goal and that would end it. And as a result he's not getting advice. That's his problem, he's not getting it. And when he gets it, he doesn't listen to it.

Q: How about your own personal relationship with the President? How would you describe it, particularly during the period from last April until now?

A: Oh, I would say it's friendly . . .

Q: How often do you see him?

A: Well, I saw him when he invited me to represent him at the Paris Air Show, and that took five minutes . . .

Q: How long ago was that?

A: About May. I saw him again at the occasion of the Harmon Trophy which, why I was invited I don't know except I was the one that got inveigled to award the trophies—that's historically done by the President. And a couple of occasions when I would be invited to the leadership meetings . . . he calls me a "wild card . . ."

Q: But has he ever sat down and asked you about what he should do about Watergate?

A: I'm getting to that. No, he never has. The last time I had a heart-to-heart, man-to-man talk with him was Nov. 22, 1972, when he called me from Florida to Camp David. We spent two or three hours.

But at that time there was no Watergate. The rumor wasn't even strong enough for me to believe it. That was the last time . . . I don't

know of anyone else he's ever called up there.

Q: But let's sum it up, what would you say your relationship with the President is today?

A: I think my relations are as good as any Republican's, even though I'm not considered in the leadership. I don't attend the meetings regularly. I feel no animosity from up there—I've had an occasional little argument with some of the underlings; but if I wanted to talk to the President right now, I could pick up the phone and he'd talk with me.

Q: But he's not calling you. These days . . .

A: Oh, hell no.

Q: The Vice President has indicated he would like to see an acceleration of this impeachment inquiry in the House, obviously wanting to get some action—to get it over with, in terms of letting the President move ahead and govern the nation. How would you view this?

A: I think it's proper, as long as they have taken that step and appropriated all the money they have. I think it's incumbent on the Democratic leadership of the House to get off its tail ends and move on this. Because the critical thing is now, not whether Nixon knew this or knew that or did this or did that, or whether there are tapes or there aren't tapes.

We've got a nation of 210 million people who need leadership and need it badly; and I've found in reading the history of our Presidents that very few Presidents satisfied the morals of all the people.

In fact, I was even shaken to find out some of the things my hero Tom Jefferson did. I don't think the American people worry about morals as long as they sense there is a leader in the White House.

Now so far as leadership goes I think in foreign affairs the people accept him. Domestically, no, they do not—and he has a long way to go.

Q: You think that the impeachment inquiry, even if it led to proceedings in the House—that it would be good to get it over with?

A: I think it would be good, in other words, I think the people who are yelling for impeachment should shut up or put up one of the two. Let's stop talking about it.

Q: You don't feel that impeachment proceedings themselves, if they should ensue, would taint the President?

A: Well, if they taint the President, that's too bad. That's his trouble. It's not the trouble of the committee.

If for example, he's given all these financial records to be looked at by the tax committee, if they find problems in there, that's his problem.

I don't think they will. I think the man has done nothing that every other man in that office hasn't done—as far as taxes go.

Q: In other words, you think this could be a route toward restoring the kind of credibility he . . .

A: I think so. I think if the House would come out and say we find no grounds for impeachment, that would immediately shut up everybody who is screaming for impeachment.

If they came out and said we think the man should stand proceedings, that's another story. And then he's going to have to wait at least another whole year to see if he's innocent or not.

Q: But you do think an early resolution of this impeachment inquiry is desirable?

A: I think it's incumbent on the leadership of the House to get it done. They're not playing around with the Republican Party and the Democratic Party—they're playing around with the American people.

Q: Operation Candor: Has it done anything to restore the President's credibility and his capacity to govern?

A: Let's look at it this way. I think it started to work, but I think that 18-minute lapse in the tape knocked it all out.

Now if I were the President, I would quit making speeches—but have a weekly press conference and iron the whole thing out, not just on Watergate or his tax problems and all that. But he should get on to the problems that face the American people.

My God, we've never had so many serious problems in the history of this nation.

Q: But his attention is diverted now?

A: As long as he has to worry about where 18 minutes went, where two tapes went, he's got his problems. I don't think Watergate itself is any more than a starter. Now it's just the residue popping up.