

Growing Discontent on the Right

Nixon's New Trouble With

Old Friends

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On July 16, the day after the momentous announcement of the forthcoming presidential trip to China, White House aide John Nidecker received a telephone call from President Nixon's own congressman, representative John G. Schmitz of Orange County, Calif. Schmitz was hopping mad.

**A
News
Analysis**

The GOP lawmaker, who is an acknowledged member of the John Birch Society, told Nidecker that he would not be taking a scheduled cruise down the Potomac in the presidential yacht Sequoia, and that he wanted nothing more to do with the President or his administration. As Schmitz announced later in a speech to the members of the House, "I have disestablished relations with the White House as long as they pursue their suicidal policy of surrendering to international communism as exemplified by the President's announced trip to meet with our sworn enemy, the Communist rulers of mainland China."

Schmitz' sudden break in diplomatic relations with 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue—which did not prevent him from later consulting White House aides in matters of importance to his district—is a sign of the growing troubles which Mr. Nixon is having with some of his old friends on the right these days.

The discontent had been growing for many months. But several spectacular events—notably the May 20 joint Nixon-Soviet announcement of impending progress on a nuclear arms agreement and the July 15 joint Nixon-Chinese announcement of the visit to Peking—have

magnified the rumbles on the right to something akin to an incipient revolt.

Among the more visible signs of discontent:

- On June 14, six former Nixon aides—men who helped him win nomination and election in 1968—met in Washington to discuss ways to translate their discontent with the President into action. Several of those present are reported to have expressed their intention to promote a Reagan for president drive.

- Leading members of Young Americans for Freedom, a youthful conservative group, have launched a draft Reagan drive with headquarters in Houston. Ronald F. Docksai, national YAF chairman, has said the committee will have active chapters in 42 states by September.

- Human Events, a conservative weekly, declared just before the China announcement in mid-July that Mr. Nixon's actions at home and abroad had pushed the country to the left in "a staggering blow" to his right-wing followers. "An increasing number of conservatives are beginning to think the unthinkable: That a Nixon defeat in 1972 might not be so catastrophic after all... that it would be better to have a liberal administration, with all the consequences that might bring, than to permit Richard Nixon to destroy the Republican party as a vehicle for conservatism." The magazine hinted that it agreed.

- Last week, 12 prominent conservative publicists and New York Conservative Party leaders met at William F. Buckley Jr.'s Manhattan townhouse and agreed to "suspend" their support of

the President because of opposition to his foreign and defense policies. "We consider that our defection is an act of loyalty to the Nixon we supported in 1968," they said in a declaration to be published in *Battle Line*, *Human Events* and *National Review*, all conservative journals.

If the conservative protesters have their troops behind them and if they continue the revolt, Mr. Nixon could encounter serious trouble on his right flank next year. So far, however, the White House does not appear to be worried. It has reacted mildly or not at all to the recent attacks and shows no sign of considering the disaffection to be deadly.

In the view of Nixon operatives, the surprising thing is that trouble on the right—up until now, at least—has been so limited.

According to the Republican National Chairman, Senator Robert Dole of Kansas, a closed meeting of political

leaders at the recent GOP National Committee meeting in Denver disclosed much critical discussion of the economy but very little criticism of Mr. Nixon's defense policy or China policy.

One valuable shield for Mr. Nixon on the right is his long history of hard anti-communism and strong support for military programs. Because of this, he has a greater immunity from right wing criticism than any other president in the Cold War era.

Another important asset is carefully nurtured support from several of the leading political heroes of the right, including Governor Ronald Reagan and Senator Barry Goldwater (Rep-Ariz.). Both have been the subject of special White House attention in connection with the China trip.

On July 15, the day of the President's announcement, White House assistant Henry A. Kissinger telephoned Rea-

gan to inform him personally that Mr. Nixon was going on the air with an important statement on a topic he could not disclose. After the announcement, Kissinger called back to discuss the situation with the governor. At a GOP dinner in San Diego a week later, Reagan backed the China initiative in ringing terms.

Goldwater made his statement July 23 in an address to the Republican National Committee meeting in Denver following face-to-face talks at the White House with both Mr. Nixon and Kissinger. While maintaining his opposition to the admission of China to the United Nations, Goldwater declared that, "If there is any chance that our President can persuade Peking to mend its ways and stop exporting aggression and violence and war, then I say more power to him."

According to participants in last Monday's meeting at

William Buckley's house in New York City, the failure of Mr. Nixon and Kissinger to give special attention to the editor of *National Review* was among the precipitating factors in Buckley's current disaffection.

According to these conservative leaders, Kissinger regularly calls Buckley to discuss foreign policy developments and Buckley can get through to Kissinger almost at will. "Bill can usually find out what's going on—but this time he could find out nothing," said one of those who met with Buckley last week.

The statement issued after the meeting and the comments of those in attendance made it clear that the objections go far beyond the China

trip. Other policies condemned by the statement in the GOP — but Winter did not believe philosophical conservatives would back the Democratic candidate or George Wallace.

cluded U.S. failure to respond to the Soviet "rapid advance" in the Mediterranean, U.S. failure to protest West German overtures to the East, and — "above all" — Mr. Nixon's failure to call public attention to the "deterioration" in U.S. military power.

"Conservatives went along with Nixon even though we thought he had a poor domestic program because we felt, despite serious doubts about some things, that he was steadfastly resisting the super doves," said Jeffrey Bell, Capitol Hill director of the American Conservative Union and a participant in the Buckley meeting.

"This began to change when the SALT (strategic arms) breakthrough was announced, a most disturbing thing to most of us. It seemed clear he was moving to limit anti-ballistic missiles . . . moving to a 'peace president' position and sacrificing American interests. Then the China thing was a major shock. It crystallized a lot of things already on the docket."

Several of the participants in the meeting said that the main problem for conservatives is that "they have no place to go" in 1972. Thomas S. Winter said that unless changes are made, "conservatives will sit on their hands, not ringing doorbells or raising money."