

# Conservative Disenchantment



1968

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By ALLAN C. BROWNFIELD

ALEXANDRIA, Va.—Richard Nixon has recently announced his plans to visit China, although there is no indication that China's aggressive policies have changed, that the hostility to the United States has lessened, or that he has a plan to maintain our commitments and obligations to the Nationalist Chinese while he pursues his adventurous policy. The majority of those who worked for Mr. Nixon's election, and voted for him, did so because they believed his promises of the 1968 campaign.

What, then, did Mr. Nixon say in the 1968 campaign concerning China? He stated that "Any American policy toward Asia must come urgently to grips with the reality of China. This does not mean, as many would simplistically have it, rushing to grant recognition to Peking, to admit it to the United Nations and to ply it with offers of trade—all of which would confirm its rulers in their present course . . . this means a policy of firm restraint, of a creative counter-pressure, designed to persuade Peking that its interests can be served only by accepting the basic rules of interna-

tionality civility." China, of course, has not changed. President Nixon, however, has.

Let us consider one other subject which excites concern on the part of those who worked for Mr. Nixon's election in 1968. That is the question of national defense. In the 1968 campaign Richard Nixon declared that "Within a year the Soviet Union will catch the United States and, if we don't get a change in leadership and policy in Washington, will pass us in deliverable nuclear capacity." Well, we did get a change, and it appears that the Soviet Union has passed us.

Candidate Nixon also stated at that time that "I do not believe that the United States can afford to accept the concept of parity . . . the Soviet Union's goal in the world . . . is still in an expansionist stage. Our goal in the world is defensive. . . . And at any kind of negotiation when one side wants to expand and the other side to defend, make sure that the side which is in the defensive position has more strength than the other side."

But Richard Nixon has seemingly failed to provide the United States with a nuclear force which is superior to that of the Soviet Union. In fact, we no longer even speak of parity, and recent reports indicate that the Soviet Union now outflanks us in the Mediterranean, making any commitments we have to countries such as Israel, Greece, Italy and Spain virtually impossible to fulfill.

Beyond this, Republicans thought that with a Republican Administration they would get less Government spending, and a return of power and authority to the local communities and, finally, to the people. This, however, has not happened. The reverse is happening. The President's Family Assistance Plan, in essence a guaranteed annual income proposal, far exceeds anything ever proposed by liberal Democrats. Inflation is mounting, as is Government spending. If Republicans are in power, you would never know it from the policies or the rhetoric coming from the White House.

As a result of all this, the same kind of idealistic young people who planned the dump-Johnson movement in 1967 are now considering a similar effort to dump Nixon, except this time it is the idealistic young conservatives, such as those in Young Americans for Freedom, who are mounting such an effort.

In 1967, the political pundits said that, in the end, the young men and women of the New Left would have to support the Democrats, for they had no place else to go. But what they did was reject such hypocrisy and duplicity and stayed home. They helped to bring about Lyndon Johnson's resignation and Hubert Humphrey's defeat. Many are now saying that conservatives, in the end, will support President Nixon, for they have



1971

*" . . . there can be no stable peace and enduring peace without the participation of the People's Republic of China . . . that is why I have undertaken initiatives in several areas to open the door for more normal relations . . ."*

no place else to go. This is a naive idea, and anyone close to the conservative movement knows that.

If the Nixon Administration continues in its present course, which seems a certainty, it will be in real danger of defeat. The President may find support for his China policy and low-defense profile on the left, but those on the left will not vote for him regardless. Whoever is giving political advice at the White House should review this fact carefully.

Credibility has been lost in both our current and just-past Administrations. If Americans come to the conclusion that, in reality, they have no control over their government—that they get the opposite of what they vote for—then the whole democratic system becomes questionable. It is up to both parties to attempt to restore this lost credibility. If they do not, the results may be disastrous for us all.

Allan C. Brownfield is a former editor of *The New Guard*, the magazine of Young Americans for Freedom, and served as assistant to the director of research of the House Republican Conference.