

# Who Else but Barry Goldwater?



**William Rusher**

THERE ARE men (Henry Clay comes to mind) who, without ever becoming President themselves, somehow manage to have a greater impact on events than some of the lucky ones who actually reach the White House. It begins to appear that Barry Goldwater may be one of these.

All during the late 1950s and early 1960s Goldwater stumped the country, spreading the message that millions of ordinary Americans were sick unto death of Big Government and of the endless costly boondoggles it entailed. In the Republican convention of 1960 he was already the conservatives' hero, and it took a direct appeal by him to persuade them to swallow Richard Nixon as the party's nominee that year.

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WHEN MR. NIXON lost to Mr. Kennedy, the Republican Party broke loose for good from its relatively liberal eastern moorings, and at San Francisco in 1964 Barry Goldwater won the presidential nomination on the first ballot, as the choice of a brand-new conservative coalition of the West, the Midwest and the South.

He had not wanted the honor, but he would not disappoint the millions who had listened to him and believed in him; so Barry Goldwater ran — and lost. But the Republican Party had changed hands for good, and that nomination battle was the turning point. Goldwater had altered the course of Republican politics, and thus inevitably of history as well.

In the winter that followed his November defeat, Goldwater made what may

well prove to be the biggest mistake of his life. Discouraged but dogged, and deeply grateful for Mr. Nixon's loyalty to the 1964 ticket once it had been nominated, Goldwater in January 1965 endorsed Mr. Nixon for the 1968 Republican presidential nomination.

It was ridiculously, disastrously early to make a decision of such crucial importance. Nearly two years later, in November 1966, Ronald Reagan — clean, charismatic and conservative — would sweep into the governorship of California with a margin of a million votes. There, surely, was the fresh and attractive face to lead the GOP in 1968. But by then Goldwater and those he had sold on Mr. Nixon were too far committed to change horses. By a handful of votes, Mr. Nixon edged over the top on the first ballot at Miami Beach.

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AND NOW Richard Nixon stands amid the ruins of his administration. Whether he knew about the Watergate operation or not, or participated in the effort to cover it up, the beleaguered President may soon face the grim alternatives of impeachment or a governmental paralysis. If that day comes, who shall head the deputation of prominent Republicans that will predictably wait upon the President and urge him to step down for the good of their party and the country? Who else but Barry Goldwater?

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