

# Republican Right Preparing for a Comeback

By DOUGLAS E. KNEELAND

Special to The New York Times

SAN FRANCISCO, July 22—The Republican right is preparing for a comeback.

Viewing Watergate and related problems of the Administration as the work of clumsy and misguided interlopers that may almost shatter the party, conservatives meeting here indicated that they were looking forward eagerly to picking up the pieces in 1976.

According to the conservatives, they believe, more than ever, that they were right in 1964 when they commandeered the party for Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, despite his landslide loss of President Johnson. And they express the conviction that subsequent events have proved the party was wrong to have yielded to "centrist" sentiment in the wake of that loss and to have nominated Richard M. Nixon in 1968.

Now, they say, they feel betrayed, not so much by the Watergate affair as by Nixon

Administration policies in foreign affairs, on deficit spending, on wage-and-price controls, on the energy crisis, on almost everything.

These opinions were repeatedly made clear by delegates and by a parade of well-known conservative speakers at the biennial political conference of the Young Americans for Freedom that wound up here over the weekend.

And the prevalent mood of Y.A.F., which was founded in 1960 on the Sharon, Conn., family estate of William F. Buckley Jr., the conservative columnist, and his brother, James L. Buckley, now a Conservative-Republican Senator from New York, is usually a good barometer of the thinking on the G.O.P. right.

"The conservatives get the rhetoric and the liberals get the action," a young delegate from Texas complained bitterly of the Nixon Administration after castigating the President for rapprochement with Communist China, moving toward

détente to the Soviet Union and practicing deficit spending.

"And if Nixon was impeached," he went on, "it would be the same with Ford. The conservatives would still get the rhetoric and the liberals would get the action."

Although the Y.A.F. organization has taken no stand on impeachment, many members expressed concern over the possible trauma to the nation and over the knowledge that the conviction and removal from office of President Nixon would leave them the hard choice of fielding a conservative candidate against a sitting President Ford or yielding once again to those they consider "centrist."

However, there are some, including Ronald F. Docksai, a Georgetown University graduate student who is national chairman, who approve Senator Buckley's announced position in favor of the President's resignation. They would risk a difficult fight in 1976 to spare the country an impeachment trial.

"I prefer resignation," Mr. Docksai said in an interview. "Impeachment would be an ominous thing that the system should avoid at all costs. At the roots of the matter is the fact that the Administration has been crippled, so the best thing Nixon could do for his country would be to resign."

Not that Mr. Docksai has much sympathy for the President.

"There's a general feeling," he said, "that the Administration has been disingenuous with us, in effect betraying the platforms for 1968 and 1972. The general feeling that many conservatives have is the same as many Republicans have—they wish the President would just disappear."

"What can one say about the Nixon Presidency?" M. Stanton Evans, editor of The Indianapolis News and chairman of the American Conservative Union, asked in an address to about 150 delegates and Y.A.F. supporters from more than 20 states. "Some good things. I'll do that."

Then he paused for several seconds.

"Now I'll talk about the bad things," he went on to loud cheers from his listeners.

"The Nixon Administration has been a calamitous experience for the American people," he said.

Mr. Evans declared that the Administration had had the op-

portunity to ride a rising tide of "conscious conservatism and some unconscious conservatism" in the country, a trend cited over and over by conference speakers who referred to various national polls. He charged, however, that the administration had "continued to do things people who voted for Nixon thought would stop."

On the same program, Representative John M. Ashbrook, the Ohio Republican who carried the conservative banner in several primary elections against Mr. Nixon in 1972, was asked if he thought Watergate would ruin the Republican party.

"No, we could perhaps lose and lose deeply," he said. "I hope it doesn't happen, but we'll survive. The Republican party can even survive Richard Nixon."

## Back to Goldwater

The three-day conference at Sheraton-Palace Hotel here was dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the Presidential nomination in this city of Senator Goldwater.

"It seems to me the basic problem goes back 10 years ago to San Francisco, which was a highpoint of the conservative movement," Mr. Evans told his audience. "But that was it. A lot of Republicans and Conservatives lost their nerve and said, 'well, we've had our ideological orgy, next time we'll got with a centrist.' I think it is clear as the total lesson before us that that was a mistake and a bad mistake."

"If one wants a conservative government, then the thing to do is nominate conservatives and elect conservatives."

Many delegates apparently agreed with Representative Ashbrook when he said that "the spirit of Goldwater has caught up with this country." And they made no secret of a determination to try again in 1976 with a new standard-bearer, Gov. Ronald Reagan of California. Representative John H. Rousselot, the California Republican who is a life member and former national director of information of the John Birch Society, introduced Mr. Reagan as a man "on the way to the White House."