



The Talk About Nixon's Comeback

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WHEN HE first came on the tube, I thought it was a sneak preview of one of the new fall shows, perhaps the TV version of the National Lampoon's Radio Hour. But it couldn't be. My TV Guide said it was the network news. So, because the guy talking looked like Senator Barry Goldwater and he sounded like Senator Barry Goldwater, I listened.

But exactly what he said, I was not sure. It had something to do with a Nixon comeback, his helping the Republican party. Something like that. My mind began to swim.

It seems Goldwater had recently lunched with Mr. Nixon and the former President "talked of his desire to get back into the political arena — not as a candidate — but as a party spokesman." Goldwater said Mr. Nixon had wondered whether he'd be accepted back into the Republican party's affairs. Goldwater said he told him he thought he would be.

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BUT, the Arizona Republican said, there was a problem. Mr. Nixon's health. The former President was reported as saying that when his health permitted "he might get out and try to be of some help" to GOP candidates and the party generally.

Although Goldwater didn't say so, there are some other problems, too. For example, there is the question of whether or not there will be a Republican party by the time Mr. Nixon gets well. In Chicago recently at a meeting of more than 40

state Republican chairmen, pollster Bob Teeter cited what he called some "unbelievable statistics" which show the GOP is sicker than the former President.

According to a survey of more than 2000 people in 42 states, only 18 per cent of the American people admit they're Republicans, 42 per cent confess to being Democrats and 40 per cent are independents.

From the GOP point of view, the findings were even grimmer in the "trustworthy" category. Only 25 per cent felt the Republican party was trustworthy, compared to 33 per cent who thought it untrustworthy. Thirty-seven per cent had no opinion. Forty-five per cent felt the Democrats could be trusted, 13 per cent thought not and 42 per cent had no opinion.

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THE INCREDIBLE THING about Goldwater's remarks is that they have been reacted to seriously. House GOP leader John Rhodes thinks a Nixon comeback is only a matter of timing.

But what, pray tell, could the different answer be? It hurts me to say it, but like the two guys in the Alka-Seltzer commercial, Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew gave the Republican party the old one-two.

The fact that the GOP is now viewed by so many people as incompetent and untrustworthy is due in large part to the untrustworthiness and incompetence of the former President and Vice President.