

CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN

GOLDWATER: HELLO, HELLO.

PRESIDENT REAGAN. HELLO. HI BARRY.

GOLDWATER: HI, MR. PRESIDENT, HOW ARE YOU.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: WELL, I AM JUST FINE. AND, LISTEN, I AM SORRY WE COULDN'T GET TOGETHER. BUT, I KNOW HOW BUSY YOU ARE AND IN JUST A FEW MINUTES, I WILL BE IN A PLANE FOR TEXAS BUT, TONIGHT I WILL WIND UP IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA AND HAVING DINNER WITH DIDI.

GOLDWATER: OH, THAT'S WONDERFUL. GIVE HER MY LOVE. NOW, ON THIS THING WE ARE GOING TO VOTE ON TOMORROW, I THINK WE HAVE GOT IN PRETTY GOOD SHAPE, THANKS TO YOU. YOUR CALLS HAVE DONE SOME GOOD. I AM GOING TO MEET WITH SENATOR DURENBERGER IN JUST ABOUT 20 MINUTES AND TRY AND GET HIM OFF THE EMBARRASSING HOOK THAT HE IS ON HAVING WRITTEN THAT LONG LETTER PROPOSING OVER TO REPLACE COVERT. WE HAVE, AS YOU KNOW, WRITTEN SEVERAL ALTERNATIVES AND I THINK THAT YOU APPROVED THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE AND CASEY WILL BRING THAT UP AND I AM GOING TO TRY AND GET DURENBERGER TO AGREE TO IT. MY COUNT RIGHT NOW SHOWS US LOSING FOUR MEMBERS AND I HAVE HAD YOUR STAFF CALL AMBASSADOR KIRKPATRICK UP AT THE UNITED NATIONS WHO IS A CLOSE FRIEND OF MOYNIHAN TO TRY TO GET MOYNIHAN TO COME AROUND TO OUR WAY OF THINKING.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: OH, BOY, I HOPE SHE CAN. BARRY, I KNOW BILL CASEY CALLED ME AND I GUESS HE IS GOING TO BE SEEING YOU, HE WAS SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT GOING UP THERE ON THE HILL AGAIN. HE WAS TALKING ABOUT IF WE FACE DEFEAT, NOT HAVING AN UP AND DOWN VOTE, BUT TRYING TO GET A BY-PARTISAN MANDATE, AS HE PUT IT, FOR CONTINUING TO ALLOW THE PRESIDENT TO DO WHAT HE IS DOING, BUT, OF COURSE, THAT IS THE VERY THING THEY ARE TRYING TO STOP. AND, WE JUST, LORDY, WE HAVE GOT TO CONTINUE THIS PROGRAM WITHOUT INTERRUPTION.

GOLDWATER: WELL, IT IS NOT JUST THAT, MR. PRESIDENT. AS I TOLD YOU THE OTHER NIGHT, I THINK SOME DAY YOU HAVE TO MAKE IT VERY, VERY CLEAR THAT THE CONSTITUTION GIVES YOU THE POWER OF FOREIGN POLICY AND YOU THE POWER OF COMMANDER IN CHIEF. NOW, WE HAVE HAD TOO MUCH FOOLING AROUND WITH THAT PART OF THE CONSTITUTION, AND WE HAVE THE WAR POWERS ACT, AND THIS BOLAND AMENDMENT, AND TO MY MIND, THEY ARE BOTH UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND I HOPE SOMEDAY, SOMEWAY, WE CAN MAKE THAT CLEAR, THESE DAMN FOOLS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ARE JUST, THEY ARE GOING TO CHANGE THE WHOLE WAY WE DO THINGS IF YOU ARE NOT CAREFUL.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: WELL, IN OTHER WORDS, YOU MEAN THAT FOR ME TO INVESTIGATE WHERE IF I JUST WENT AHEAD AND WERE TO CHALLENGE THEM LEGALLY THAT THEY WERE VIOLATING THE CONSTITUTION.

GOLDWATER: I THINK THAT IS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT. I TRIED TO PUT TOGETHER ABOUT HALF MILLION DOLLARS TO FIGHT THAT WAR POWERS ACT AND I COULDN'T RAISE A DIME. BUT, I THINK SOMETIME, AND YOU GET THE ADVICE OF YOUR LAWYERS. I THINK YOU WOULD DO A GREAT SERVICE TO THE COUNTRY IF YOU CONTESTED THE LEGALITY OF ONE OR BOTH OF THEM.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: I SHALL, I AM GOING TO TURN THEM LOSE ON THAT BECAUSE I FEEL AS YOU DO. THIS, WE CANNOT GO ON THIS WAY. LORDY, THAT IS HOW WE LOST VIETNAM. THE CONGRESS DID IT WITH SHUTTING OFF OF THE FUNDS. WE LOST ANGOLIA IN THE SAME WAY. AND HERE WE ARE NOW, RIGHT IN OUR OWN BACKYARD.

GOLDWATER: WELL, YOU KNOW THERE HAS BEEN A GOOD BOOK WRITTEN ON THIS SUBJECT AND I AM GOING TO SEND YOU A COPY. IT WAS WRITTEN BY A RETIRED MAJOR GENERAL OF THE MARINES, WHO IS ABOUT AS TOUGH A BASTARD AS I HAVE EVER RUN INTO, AND HE VERY CAREFULLY EXPLAINS THAT NEARLY 200 YEARS OF OUR BELIEVING IN THE SUPREMECY OF THE CITIZEN OVER THE MILITARY WORKED, BUT WE HAVE LOST THE LAST TWO WARS WE HAVE BEEN IN BECAUSE THE CIVILIAN DOES NOT KNOW WHAT THE HELL HE IS DOING.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: YEH, YEH, YEP.

GOLDWATER: AND, I AM GOING TO SEND YOU A COPY.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: WELL ALRIGHT. LISTEN, IF IT APPEARS THAT WE CANNOT OBTAIN A CLEAR FIRM MANDATE FROM THE COMMITTEE, I AM PREPARED, IF ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY, TO EXECUTE A NEW, COMPREHENSIVE FINDING ON CENTRAL AMERICA

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AND BRING IT INTO LINE WITH THE POLICY I SPELLED OUT IN THAT SPEECH, AND THE BOTTOM LINE COULD BE THAT WE HAVE NO QUARREL WITH NICARAGUA AS LONG AS THEY MIND THEIR OWN DAMN BUSINESS.

GOLDWATER: WELL, THAT IS ESSENTIALLY ALTERNATIVE NUMBER 3.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: YEP.

GOLDWATER: WHERE WE ASK YOU TO COME UP WITH ANOTHER PROPOSAL.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: BUT, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE JUST ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY BECAUSE I FEEL IT IS VITAL THAT WE GO FORWARD.

GOLDWATER: WE HAVE TO. AND, LOOK, I LIVE DOWN ON THAT MEXICAN BORDER AND I DON'T WANT THOSE BASTARDS TO START SHOOTING AT ME. I MIGHT HAVE TO SHOOT BACK.

REAGAN: YES.

GOLDWATER: WELL YOU HAVE A GOOD TRIP.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: OK.

GOLDWATER: AND I WILL BE OUT THERE MYSELF SATURDAY NIGHT FOR THE, I WON'T BE THERE AT THE BANQUET, WE HAVE OUR ANNUAL AIR FORCE BALL WHERE WE RAISE MONEY, AND I HAVE TO BE THERE.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: WELL, OK.

GOLDWATER: SO, STIR EM UP.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: ALRIGHT.

GOLDWATER: ALL, RIGHT, MR. PRESIDENT: BYE-BYE.

REAGAN: BYE.