5

The New Normal: Asia First Realpolitik

During the early 1960s, grassroots groups like the John Birch Society (JBS) grew in numbers and confidence, while conservative politicians continued to wage battle on moderate liberalism in Washington. With civil rights, regional electoral changes, and foreign affairs fueling conservatism's mobilization, the timing appeared increasingly ripe for the right to advance as a political movement. Meanwhile, the situation in East and Southeast Asia grew tenser. An ideological rift between the Soviet Union and China revealed itself to the entire world, upending established preconceptions about the dynamic between the two nations as well as the delicate balance of the entire Cold War. Chinese intervention in Vietnam and ensuing questions about its objectives made the lack of an articulate US China policy all the more glaring.

With the emergence of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a power in its own right, its intentions seemed all the more alarming for their unknowability. During an August 1963 press conference, Pres. John F. Kennedy summarized what the PRC looked like from the perspective of American leadership: "[W]eak countries around it, 700 million people, a Stalinist internal regime, and nuclear powers, and a government determined on war as a means of bringing about its ultimate success." Kennedy warned that the United States faced "potentially a more dangerous situation than any we faced since the end of the second war." Even when the Soviet Union acted aggressively, as with the invasion of South Korea, it used proxies and limited its intervention. The same could not be said for China; its unpredictability was what made it so threatening.[1]

Sen. Barry Goldwater was the standard-bearer for the American right during that time. As the 1964 Republican nominee for president, he had an unprecedented opportunity to cement midcentury conservatism as a proac-

tive philosophy that addressed the nation's global concerns. In April, Goldwater listed foreign policy first among major campaign issues.[2] James Burnham confidently wrote in the *National Review* that a Goldwater foreign policy would be "positive and dynamic: affirming both the ideals and the strength of our country" and ensure that "we, not the new barbarians, will master whatever wave the future may send."[3]

Committed military intervention, defense buildup, and American unilateralism overseas were at the core of the campaign's foreign policy message. They were lessons imparted by Asia First; demands for victory by all available means had been part of conservative internationalism since the Korean War. The senator's stated willingness to develop and use strategic atomic weapons in Southeast Asia made perfect sense along those lines, and like Robert Taft and William Knowland before him, Goldwater used events in Asia to shape his critique of US foreign policy and linked diplomatic setbacks to failures in federal government. From a developmental perspective, his foreign policy platform represented an apex for conservative internationalism.

The campaign itself was an uphill fight, however. Not only did Goldwater face an incumbent president, but presenting the right's brand of anticommunism as a solid foundation on which to base US foreign policy during a time of heightened intervention was no small task. Conservative internationalism may have become a commonplace notion, but its early associations with the recklessness of McCarthyism and the China Lobby still lingered. Liberals painted the right as an extremist bloc with a recent history of witch hunts and paranoia, unfit to lead the country and the world. Rifts within the conservative movement itself also presented significant hurdles. One example was the divide between William F. Buckley Jr.'s push for conservative intellectualism and the extremist beliefs of the JBS. While Buckley and *National Review* strove to present the right as a mainstream political option with a cerebral edge, their efforts clashed with the "popular front" methods that Robert Welch advocated and which left the entire movement vulnerable to ridicule.[4]

Goldwater's approach to Asia was a vital reason why his candidacy was able to unite conservatism's factions under the GOP banner. Indeed, the role of Asia in the 1964 California Republican primary, which clinched his party nomination, should be considered a major factor alongside postwar migration patterns and regional antistatism. The senator highlighted defense as a centerpiece of his presidential campaign, reemphasizing points that Asia First officials had made during the 1950s. His reputation as an ideologue in turn attracted grassroots factions like the JBS who were firmly pro–Free China but sometimes eyed the GOP as an entity that diluted militant conservatism.

Extensive study has been devoted to Goldwater's place within the con-

servative movement, with previous scholars uniformly acknowledging how the senator's presidential nomination influenced the right's growth for years afterward.[5] However, there has been little analysis devoted to his approach to issues like overseas intervention and collective security. This chapter takes the opportunity to do so, for the build-up to the 1964 race spotlighted the changing contours of conservative foreign policy during what was, for all intents and purposes, a wartime election. An examination of the senator's positions on US-Asia relations reveals the centrality of global anticommunism, foreign policy, and the Pacific Rim in the development of this rightwing icon.

At the same time, the history of Goldwater's relationship with China and East Asia proved a great deal more emblematic than exceptional. As he demonstrated, conservative internationalism's continued approach to China combined ideological rigidity with a flexibility born of Cold War realities. For Asia First, the early 1960s into the normalization of US-China relations during the late 1970s was a phase of both change and stasis. On one hand, it underwent significant revisions at the hands of Cold War triangulation and a recalibrated Taiwan policy. On the other, even as the Sino-Soviet split forced a readjustment of common definitions of "global communism," escalation and continued intervention in Vietnam reinforced preexisting notions about China's intentions in Southeast Asia.

The result was a conditional sort of realpolitik that was more sophisticated and less reactionary than initially credited. Later approaches to Communist China and Taiwan during the uneven advance to official US-PRC relations showed the new normal for conservatism—a legitimate internationalism that complemented its domestic stances and could adapt to changes in global affairs.

The China Connection

Given his Sunbelt home state (Arizona) and the context in which he first entered national politics (the Korean War), Goldwater was poised to usher Asia First into this later phase. Like many of his contemporaries, his initial encounter with East Asia came during World War II. As a first lieutenant in the Air Corps, he helped establish a new flight school in Yuma, Arizona, where he supervised pilot training on subjects like aerial gunnery and twin-engine instruction. Among his students were pilots from the Nationalist Chinese Air Force who were in the United States to gain flight experience and learn updated combat techniques that they would use against the Japanese. A group portrait taken in 1942 shows Goldwater proudly beaming with a cohort of his Chinese trainees (figure 5.1). Upon arriving at the India-China-Burma front

FIGURE 5.1. Barry Goldwater (*middle row, far left*) with Chinese Nationalist airmen, February 1942, Barry Goldwater Negative No. 89118, Barry M. Goldwater Papers, Arizona State University Libraries.

as a service pilot in 1944, Goldwater was pleased to find that many of the Guomindang pilots had been students at Yuma and Luke Field. While abroad he continued to train Chinese pilots to use the American aircraft that arrived as part of the China aid package approved by Franklin Roosevelt.

In his memoirs, Goldwater described how wartime work with the Nationalist armed forces caused him to form a positive opinion of what China, as an ally fighting against totalitarianism, could do if given appropriate support from the United States. That impression would color his attitude toward US-China relations for the rest of his life, and Asia would continue to shape his politics.[6] The Korean War, for example, was the catalyst that led Goldwater into public life. With this conflict in the Pacific, he sensed a decline in the public's willingness to automatically support US foreign policy: "As the Korean War dragged on, more and more of the people I talked with in Arizona expressed dissatisfaction with the national government. They didn't like the no-win war we were fighting in Korea. They objected to the giveaways of the Marshall Plan."[7] Goldwater himself believed that mere containment was no way to win, and, like the Asia First leaders already in office, he interpreted Douglas MacArthur's dismissal as a "signal that our country was unwilling to

win in Korea and uphold our Asian commitments."[8] Troubled by the course of American policy, Goldwater decided to run for the US Senate in 1952.[9] It was a decision that made him part of what have been dubbed the postwar "G.I. rebellion" campaigns that featured reform candidates who were also veterans.[10]

Given conventional odds, Goldwater appeared to have no chance of winning. His opponent, Earnest McFarland, was the Senate majority leader and one of the most powerful men in Washington. However, postwar migration had diluted Arizona's traditional Democratic base, war in the Pacific once again demanded American lives and finances, and the roots of a nascent conservative movement were taking hold.

Past and present developments in East Asia provided vital context for Goldwater's critique of his opponent and the Truman presidency to which McFarland was closely tied. Asking voters to choose between "fear and faith," he cast Democrats as the progenitors of a corrupt system that badly needed to be reformed.[11] Like other Republicans running for office that year, Goldwater invoked the loss of China: "I believed the whole complex apparatus which had led us into what, in my opinion, amounted to a betrayal of the Nationalist forces of mainland China had been a tremendous concession to the communists and needed to be investigated," he recalled.[12] In the words of Goldwater's publicity team, a vote for Goldwater was a counter against corruption and an affirmation of "those moral principles which have made this nation the greatest citadel of freedom in the history of civilization."[13]

According to that calculus, the ongoing war in Korea was the most immediate evidence of the liberalism that threatened the "citadel" America had built, and McFarland made a grave error on that score shortly before election. During an unguarded moment, he described the Korean War as "cheap," explaining that the conflict was relatively inexpensive: for every American casualty, nine Chinese were killed. Goldwater pounced, challenging McFarland to find "a single mother or father who counts our casualties as cheap—who'd be willing to exchange the life of one American boy for the nine Communists, or 900 Red Communists, or 9,000,000 Communists." This election, he asserted, was an opportunity for Arizonans to assert their desire for integrity in government; the choice was between "good over evil, truth over falsehood, and peace over war." Thanks to the Pacific Cold War, McFarland's imprudence, and his own ability to capitalize on an opponent's error, Goldwater narrowly won with just over 51 percent of the vote, entering the US Senate as part of the GOP's national resurgence.[14]

The learning curve for a novice senator was steep. Some of his new constituents subscribed to a die-hard antistatism that had nothing but disdain for the federal government. "I am praying for a storm of skunk shit to fall over

Washington, D.C., and I sincerely hope that it centers around the Finance Committee of the United States Senate," wrote one irate Arizonan.[15] From the new senator's perspective, the average working man was hard-pressed on all sides, his basic freedoms swiftly eroded by the welfare state and the threat of communism. Conservatism was the only ideology that effectively addressed all those concerns.[16] Goldwater immersed himself in the domestic issues with which he became synonymous: open shop labor, lower taxes, and curtailing the federal government's reach into American daily life. He became close with Taft and served on the highly visible Labor and Public Welfare Committee at the latter's behest.[17] According to campaign manager Stephen Shadegg, Goldwater's efforts on behalf of "right to work" even elicited death threats from Jimmy Hoffa.[18]

When it came to foreign policy, the junior senator took his cues from Asia Firsters, especially Knowland and Styles Bridges. These mentors impressed on their colleague the importance of offering a conservative alternative to liberal containment. While he had no desire to emulate his California colleague's abrasive style, Goldwater admired the forthrightness Knowland brought to public office: "We were good friends. He was a man of great intelligence, strong philosophical conviction, devoted to the nation's welfare."[19] The two forged a particularly close relationship in which the freshman senator, a quick study, was regularly exposed to the majority leader's stewardship of GOP foreign policy at a critical time for conservative internationalism.

Conscience's Cold War

With many key conservative officials retired, defeated, or deceased by the end of the 1958 elections, Goldwater became the Republican right's brightest hope. His duties as chairman of the Senatorial Campaign Committee included stumping for GOP candidates across the country. Along the way, he became a familiar face to grassroots organizations that added to his future political capital.[20] "Out of a good deal of wreckage, Barry Goldwater's election stands as one of the few firm, solid items," wrote one supporter from Chicago. "At this moment he is a rallying point for those who wish to preserve our form of Government and our economic and social stability."[21] National media outlets took notice. The *Los Angeles Times* asked the new face of Republican conservatism to write a thrice-weekly political column called "How Do You Stand, Sir?" Within a year, it was syndicated and began to appear in one hundred forty newspapers.[22]

But the text that arguably made Goldwater a household name was somebody else's brainchild. Radio commentator and lecturer Clarence Manion be-

gan an early campaign to draft the senator as a presidential candidate for 1960. After obtaining Goldwater's somewhat reluctant approval, Manion tapped Brent Bozell (conservative journalist and Bill Buckley's brother-in-law) to ghostwrite a political manifesto. Essentially a piece of campaign literature, *The Conscience of a Conservative* was released in June 1960 with Goldwater's name on the cover and his photograph on the back.[23]

Largely marketed through word of mouth, the book became a phenomenon; in 1979, Goldwater estimated some 3.5 million copies had been sold.[24] After only eight years in public office, his reputation was such that his name symbolized America's idea of what "conservative" meant.[25] "'Movement' was the proper word," journalist Teddy White wrote. "The wordless resentments, angers, frustrations, fears and hopes that were shaping this force were something new and had welled up long before Goldwater himself took his Presidential chances seriously."[26]

A simple and direct narrative voice that distilled the right's plethora of concerns into a rousing call to arms accounted for much of the book's appeal: "For the American Conservative, there is no difficulty in identifying the day's overriding political challenge: it is *to preserve and extend freedom*."[27] Higher taxes, social welfare provision, expansion of the welfare state, abrogation of states' rights, liberal interpretations of the Constitution, and weak diplomacy—all were taken as symptoms of the disintegration of individual liberty in the United States.

Given the mounting degree of US intervention in Southeast Asia and the prospect of a Communist China with its own diplomatic agenda at the moment of publication, *Conscience*'s treatment of foreign policy deserves special attention. After nine chapters on domestic issues, it ended with a section called "The Soviet Menace": "We can establish the domestic conditions for maximizing freedom, along the lines I have indicated, and yet become slaves. We can do this by losing the Cold War to the Soviet Union."[28] Part historical synopsis, part policy proposal, it outlined the authority the right believed it could bring to diplomatic relations and how far conservative internationalism had come within a short period of time.

Notably, intervention was a given. Absolutely no references were made to previous phases of isolationism. By equating the position of the United States during the Cold War to the uncertain revolutionary period of the late eighteenth century, Goldwater's position on foreign affairs was presented in terms of keeping a wary eye on imperialism. The struggle against global communism was a fight to preserve freedom for a nation whose interests had expanded around the world.[29]

In terms of defense, *Conscience* maintained that the way for the United

States to properly protect itself while safeguarding its traditional values was through a continued build-up of nuclear weapons and unilateralism. When combined with prepared armed forces, intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) would allow the nation to meet any scenario.[30] Nuclear development was the "long-overdue answer" that had the potential to limit warfare and ensure that the United States remained competitive against the manpower of the Communist world.[31] Multilateral alliances were too defensive in nature and impinged on American sovereignty; foreign aid programs were unconstitutional; and the United Nations (UN) was "in part a Communist organization" that gave the Soviet Union veto power. The objective should be victory rather than mere containment, and the United States itself had to strive to be better, faster, and stronger than its opponents. At bottom, this was an issue of sovereignty. Goldwater took the position that the nation could rely only on itself and not on the cooperation of the global community.

Conservatives' lingering interpretation of the Korean War was readily apparent as the text drew parallels to that conflict and the emerging situation in Vietnam. Just as Harry Truman had refused to allow MacArthur to cross the Yalu during Korea, naysayers stymied the Department of Defense and the conservative minority that wanted to see peace in Southeast Asia on American terms. By not taking advantage of technological advances and using every weapon they could to end the Cold War, Washington officials again immorally prolonged a conflict that the United States could win outright. Korea had exemplified the shortcomings of the UN as an effective peacekeeping entity; its bylaws kept the US on a leash even as the organization gave an individual president the ability to take the country to war without congressional input.

In contrast, the defense plan Goldwater advocated ostensibly offered a model of preemptive self-reliance rather than perilous collective peacekeeping.[32] It had a literal cost, however. More research and more weapons of course meant more money spent. From Goldwater's perspective, the price of winning against an armed Soviet Union and an ascendant China would be high yet worth it: "Such a program costs money, but so long as the money is spent wisely and effectively, I would spend it. I am not in favor of economizing' on the nation's safety."[33] His words were a direct echo of Knowland's 1952 convention speech about building muscle and not fat in the defense state. However, whereas Knowland's idea of increased spending had sounded novel for the right in the early 1950s, by 1960 the notion of allowing broad exceptions in the name of national security was a point of pride and not a contradiction of antistatism.

Indeed, many of the specifics on foreign policy outlined in *Conscience* continued the struggle waged by Knowland and other Asia Firsters against

expansion of executive power and the UN during the 1950s.[34] The text described the UN as an overblown debating forum that allowed the airing of communist propaganda; moreover, as the organization's "fairy godfather," the United States was footing an expensive bill and burdening its taxpayers with no immediate, beneficial result. It argued that, in a situation as desperate as the struggle for global supremacy, there was no room for American officials ("UN Firsters") whose loyalty lay not with their country but with a diplomatic bureaucracy that legitimized and harbored communist aggression. Last but not least, the UN threatened "the unconstitutional surrender of U.S. sovereignty" and therefore the United States' freedom to act as it saw fit in the world.[35]

An insistence on nuclear build-up combined with harsh condemnation of both collective peacekeeping and foreign aid illuminated an inherent demand for unilateralism in foreign policy. Multilateral alliances, treaties, and other "understandings" were considered to be porous and unable to ensure national security. Moreover, should the Soviets or their affiliates be brought to the table, American officials were already put on the defensive by their agreement to negotiate with the enemy. Throwing money around was also not the answer: "Our Foreign Aid program, in sum, is not only ill-administered, but ill-conceived. It has not, in the majority of cases, made the free world stronger; it has made America weaker." By freely giving funding away without guarantee of results, the United States presumably created dependent welfare states around the world.[36]

Above all, the book underscored conservatives' long-standing global-domestic interpretation of the Cold War. It insisted that "unlimited power in Washington" was at least as dangerous as "the aggressive designs of Moscow." Even if the United States was able to eradicate foreign danger, the nation remained susceptible to destruction from domestic collectivism. Likewise, aggression from the Kremlin could never be stopped unless significant reform took place in Washington.[37] On the role of ordinary men and women, the text struck a tone similar to that of activist literature on the same subject. Citizens were a critical part of the equation; they needed to understand that their individual liberty had international ramifications and they needed to remain vigilant about the health of American democracy.[38]

Even if a literal interpretation of "Asia First" became less and less likely, a foreign relations ethos imparted by the initial push for Chiang's restoration still remained prominent. Unilateralism and the resources that allowed the United States to act the way it saw fit were key components, whereas technological advancements in the defense industry permitted conservatives to sustain their call for American self-sufficiency in foreign policy. The demand

for defense proliferation worked on two levels: interiorly, to cure the nation's reluctance to embrace nuclear weapons as tools to end the Cold War; and exteriorly, to grant the United States the firepower it needed to talk and act tough when dealing with hostile nations. Conservatism's complaint was not that the United States was too involved with world affairs but that, when it was involved, its emissaries were either unwilling or ill equipped to bring conflict to swift, favorable resolution.

Public reception of Goldwater's strident positions was incredibly polarized. For those weary of containment, the message of "victory" in the national interest resonated deeply. It also elicited a great deal of cynicism among political opponents. *The Worker*, for example, discovered that the headquarters of Young Americans for Freedom (the youth organization founded by Buckley in 1960) was located at the same New York City address as Marvin Liebman Associates, the public relations firm retained by Walter Judd's Committee of One Million. A March 1961 article insinuated that "Goldwater's Youth Corps" and "the Chiang Kai-shek Lobby" were one and the same and that the proto-fascist JBS was also part of the conspiracy.[39] Suspicions that a sinister China Lobby was trying to unduly influence American policy still persisted, as if that were the only way the right could advance a foreign policy.

However, the very fact that Goldwater's philosophy of foreign relations responded to developments in Latin America, Africa, and Asia showed how conservatism, with the senator as its spokesperson, continued to adapt to postcolonial movements around the world.

China and the Third World

If *Conscience of a Conservative* provided a long glance at where GOP conservatism stood on a few key diplomatic issues, its sequel, *Why Not Victory?* (1962), was dedicated entirely to foreign policy. Goldwater again stressed tactical proliferation as a distasteful yet necessary resource to keep communist powers at bay. "Nations do not arm for war. They arm to keep themselves from war," he wrote.[40] The diplomatic contexts surrounding such a nuclear-centric strategy were made clearer in this new text: destabilization within the US-Soviet relationship, as well as the aftereffects of decolonization in the Third World, prompted its strident positions. In the wake of the Cuban Revolution and Bay of Pigs crisis, Goldwater invoked the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine as a basis for hemispheric defense against communist expansion disguised as native nationalism.[41]

Third Worldism was seen as a distinct threat to American interests, and

it could be directly traced to China's increased diplomatic influence in the Pacific and beyond after the Bandung Conference. In 1960, Goldwater and Bozell had evoked fears of a menace originating from the Asian continent: "If all nuclear weapons suddenly ceased to exist, much of the world would immediately be laid open to conquest by masses of Russian and Chinese manpower."[42] Talk of disarmament played directly into one of communism's strengths—its sheer numbers. Images of Asia's swarming millions were vividly familiar to the American Pacific Rim, and they retained a rhetorical potency. Although the method of defense was different and the stakes higher, *Why Not Victory?* depicted the threat of Cold War Yellow Peril in much the same terms as nineteenth-century fears of Chinese immigration, and it predicted that, unless the United States chose to mount a resistance, fears of Asian invasion would be realized.

Such a heightened use of stereotypical, racialized imagery of a hostile China to advance a political agenda indicated a subtle though significant change in direction for Asia First. Conservative elites of the previous decade had emphasized China's democratic potential by describing its people as counterparts the American government was responsible for saving. In the 1960s, with a powerful PRC armed with nuclear weapons a distinct possibility, conservatives recast China as an adversary that was on par with the Soviet Union but even more difficult to understand. In a departure from previous Asia Firsters, Goldwater and his colleagues abandoned any pretense of humanitarianism by insisting national interest and security, rather than the democratic salvation of souls behind the Bamboo Curtain, were their primary motivations for a tough China policy.

The maturation of conservative internationalism vis-à-vis China was evident. Ideologues had finally arrived at an argument for fighting the Cold War that could appeal to a broad swath of conservative voters: national self-interest. The right acknowledged the importance of foreign policy and clearly abandoned doctrinaire isolationism, but that did not mean it forsook nationalism as a motivation for its diplomatic ethos. In 1950, voices on the right asserted that the condition of China reflected the condition of the United States itself. By the early 1960s, they had graduated to the idea that what was best for the United States was best for the world, and its officials should be able to exercise a free hand starting in the near future.

Why Not Victory? once again pointed to the UN as an obstacle to American unilateralism and China's admission as a perennial sticking point. "I have a proposal to make to meet this annual challenge," Goldwater wrote. "'[T]he government of the United States should declare that if the United Nations

votes to admit Red China, our government will, from that moment until the action is revoked, suspend its political and financial support of the United Nations."[43]

Although the senator retained some of the old argument about potential Soviet gains, he also dealt with China in its own right, particularly its growing influence in the developing world. Despite reports of starvation and repression on the mainland, China's international influence grew stronger with each passing year. Its admission to the UN emerged as a real possibility.[44] Because of the long history of European imperialism and China's new stature as an anticolonial power, African republics were the UN bloc with which Goldwater was most concerned should the Chinese issue come to a vote. Those new nations were "still ignorant—let's face it—of the ways of the world" and could not be allowed to obstruct the course of US foreign policy. While decolonization represented an advance for global democracy, it had also created unpredictable allies. The senator cautioned that new African states needed to know "that the greatest colonialism ever developed, anywhere, is that of communism in China."[45] American policy under the Democrats simply was not strong enough to keep lesser nations in line and maintain China's exclusion from the UN.

Partisanship aside, Goldwater's words underscored real fears of Third World nationalism. His arguments pointed to the UN as a conduit for disaster wrought by *both* undeveloped states and communism. Nonwhite peoples would become firm anticommunist allies only if the US policy took a hard enough stand: "The true friends of international peace and freedom everywhere, including millions upon millions of Asiatics, will look upon us with gratitude and confidence."[46] Blurring the line between leadership and paternalism, Goldwater insisted America should teach more naive countries that their interests aligned with those of the United States, the original beacon of anticolonialism.

The senator did not omit Taiwan from his analysis. While a "swarm" of refugees from the PRC fled oppression, "By contrast, Formosa's economy is thriving, land redistribution has brought a wide ownership of property, and the morale of its armed forces is at an all-time high."[47] Taiwan was proof of what developing nations were capable of if their governments fully aligned with the West: prosperity, individual self-reliance, and a strong partnership with the United States. Such attributes brought the alleged decline of "civilization" in the PRC into sharp contrast, and Goldwater implied that these attributes were proof that Taiwan deserved to represent China in the UN. If such a worthy country were to be replaced, the political and moral effects would be devastating to world peace.

Aftermath

As *Conscience* became a national bestseller, Goldwater was transformed from regional politician into a contender in the upcoming presidential race.[48] To his supporters, he represented the first conservative candidate who spoke with equal authority on issues global and domestic. He could soothe Americans "apprehensive about the encroachment of federal authority in their everyday lives" and also "lead the country back to the days when Uncle Sam walked unchallenged and foreign alliances were taboo."[49]

The timing was ideal, for the various branches of the right—from Cold Warriors to tax warriors to antifluoridation warriors—were coalescing into a genuine political movement that drew from a deep well of social and cultural ferment. Not only did conservatives have the will to institute reform in Washington, their impulses were supported by an emerging prevalence of ideas (articulated by *National Review*) and political culture (magnified by the JBS). Even if total agreement between factions was impossible, the rift between Buckley and Welch remained a case in point, most shared the objective of national power.

As the subject of the draft effort, Goldwater's long-standing goal was not to destroy the GOP but to recapture it. That meant an internal power struggle against Eastern moderates like Nelson Rockefeller and George Romney, as well as convincing his supporters that the GOP was their natural home base.[50] At the 1960 convention, Goldwater urged fellow conservatives to tow the party line: "[F]or Conservatives there exists no other alternative to Nixon. This is true whether they be 'Taft Republicans' or 'Jeffersonian Democrats.'"[51] That gesture of loyalty nonetheless did not mean consensus. His very presence at the podium served notice that conservatives were an integral part of the Republican organization and the GOP needed their voting power.[52] Meanwhile, young, conservative politicians were shaking up the hierarchy, jolting liberal and moderate "do-nothings" from complacency.[53] One candidate expressed his exuberance about conservatism's prospects, despite having lost his own bid for Congress in 1962: "I am encouraged about the future from everything I hear," he wrote Goldwater after Election Day.[54]

After 1960, grassroots organizations mobilized in earnest for the next campaign for the White House. In a remarkable display of ability and coordination, groups from Connecticut to Ohio to California began laying the groundwork for a presidential candidacy.[55] They had *Conscience* translated into German, Spanish, and Italian, to attract immigrant voters; investigated Rockefeller's tactics in New Hampshire; and refined the right's platform by consulting with conservative intellectuals.[56] Activists across the country galvanized to get out

the vote for a candidate who was "the wave of the future . . . young, dynamic, and alive."[57] The Arizona senator, according to Phyllis Schlafly, "combined the integrity of Robert Taft with the glamour of Dwight Eisenhower."[58] George Sokolsky described him as "unspoiled by Park Avenue sophistication," a man untainted by the cynicism that marked the East Coast establishment.[59] Goldwater's regionalism set him apart from Washington politics as usual, particularly the capitol's traditional diplomatic focus on Europe.

Therefore, it was to be reasonably expected that a commitment to security in the Pacific would inform a Goldwater administration's approach to foreign policy. Campaign advisors touted the nominee's expertise in foreign affairs and marketed his platform toward conservatives eager to see one of their own take a decisive stand.[60] The senator's tough talk on communism and Vietnam certainly fulfilled their expectations. Schlafly's *A Choice Not an Echo* illuminated the degree to which grassroots activists valued foreign relations. A call for aggressive action in international affairs and denunciation of what the author labeled "America Last" foreign policy underscored the whole text. It amplified the demand for diplomatic self-sufficiency. If elected, Schlafly wrote, Goldwater would "let the Soviet system collapse of its own internal weaknesses . . . curtail the foreign giveaway programs, as well as the level of Federal spending."[61] As president he would place the United States' needs above all else and carry conservative mores of fiscal thrift, individuality, and sovereignty into the diplomatic realm.[62] Albert Wedemeyer, a member of the Asia First vanguard, also gave an enthusiastic endorsement.[63]

Even if Goldwater personally did not agree with all of those voices on every single issue (he once remarked of Schlafly, "She's so conservative she makes me look like a socialist"[64]), he conceded that grassroots activists, even the radical ones, were a key component of his base. Public display of internal dissent could splinter the fragile alliance that had coalesced around his candidacy and jeopardize conservatism's quest for national relevance.[65]

1964

Whatever their political persuasion, all presidential candidates had to face the uncertainty of China after the deep ideological split between the Soviet Union and the PRC came to light in the summer of 1963. From an American perspective, the prospect of a China that was close to nuclear armament but unregulated by the Soviet Union was not an opportunity for triangulation so much as a likely disaster. A close Sino-Soviet working relationship had suggested at least the possibility of mitigation while US-Soviet relations improved after the Cuban Missile Crisis.

In her commencement address at St. John's University that June, Clare Boothe Luce outlined the confusion wrought by what she called a destabilizing "crisis" between two Communist allies. The Soviets and the Chinese were still in agreement on their shared objective of achieving Communism's global domination, Luce asserted. Where they differed was on "how to bury us the fastest." Khrushchev did not accept nuclear war as inevitable; Mao insisted peaceful coexistence betrayed global Marxism.[66] Luce saw an unbridled China as a greater threat than the Soviet Union, just as Kennedy had the previous summer. But as a longtime Asia Firster who was the cochairman of the National Citizens Committee for Goldwater, she offered an even starker analysis: China used cynical charges of racism to discredit Soviet leadership in a communist world whose majority population was not white. Mao, like Genghis Khan, sought to bury Moscow and then conquer the West, and he would wield a nuclear bomb to do so.[67]

Luce deftly used a host of imageries to portray the dangers of a China at odds with the Soviet Union. Her language often called to mind the racialized fears of Yellow Peril that surfaced after the Russo-Japanese War. In her summation, she used gendered terms to illustrate the predicament the United States faced. "Mother China" was the nation to fear. "[N]othing—short of nuclear annihilation—can stop her from breeding by the end of this decade a billion children. And we must not deceive ourselves, it will take the Chinese time, but they will find the means of creating a nuclear arsenal sooner or later."

Given its harsh language, the address ended on a rather surprising note. With China making military interventions in Southeast Asia, moving steadily closer to nuclear capability, and increasingly prestigious in the Third World, whoever won the White House would have to rethink Asia policy in order to halt Chinese expansionism and avoid World War III. Withdrawal from Vietnam remained off the table, but the time had come to "go over Mao's head." The next president would do well to appeal directly to the Chinese people with trade and food aid. It had worked with Russians—why not China?[68] According to Luce, Mother China could be wooed and won.

Her proposal proved to be one of the more progressive suggestions on what do to about China. The candidate himself still clung to the standard narrative of the 1950s: "The sell-out of freedom was on our minds. Hiss had been part of the US delegation at Yalta. We were also concerned about the fall of Chiang Kai-shek. Despite his faults, Chiang was more faithful to the cause of liberty than Mao Tse-tung," Goldwater recalled.[69] He continued to champion the development and use of nuclear weapons as November drew closer. Unless the United States was willing to match Communist states' motivation

and protect itself and its national interests, democracy would presumably be lost: "Free world and US security are indeed indivisible."[70] A hesitancy to explore all available means, he proclaimed, was tantamount to cowardice. Even worse, it was a sign of weakness both the Soviet Union and China could exploit. Goldwater remained consistent even within his private correspondence. After the passage of a new nuclear-test ban treaty, he wrote to close friend Bill Saufley: "In my own opinion this could well be the opening wedge to disastrous negotiations with the enemy, which could result in our losing the war or becoming a part of their system."[71]

Such confident, sweeping assertions contrasted sharply with Goldwater's inconsistencies on how exactly he would manage China through diplomatic channels. An increasingly indefinite stance on the UN was a case in point. Whereas he had sounded absolutist two years prior, recent developments in East and Southeast Asia had apparently forced a reevaluation. Goldwater vacillated between describing the UN as a valuable forum and denouncing the rules that made discussion among nations possible. One morning he said the United States should withdraw from the UN if the latter admitted Red China; at the next stop he declared that the United States should remain in the organization. Goldwater's position was no clearer on paper. In six pages of *Where I Stand*, the companion text to his campaign, he made declarations and exceptions to the point where the reader might wonder exactly what American participation in the UN would entail during his administration.[72] The one real constant was his refusal "to recognize Red China, even though it 'exists.'"[73] Flexibility in diplomatic affairs was an admirable virtue, but fluctuation between absolutes easily translated as recklessness.

Goldwater walked a tightrope when discussing diplomacy as his party's nominee. Any nuances within his foreign policy platform were crowded out, despite his own insistence that the nation's foreign policy should be a "clear statement of our interests, a vision of the sort of world in which nations like ours can live."[74] A belief in the country's right and ability to act to protect its own interests was a solid ideological stance. Armament was an expression of self-reliance and self-defense.[75] However, translating ideas about morality and national interest–as–world interest into reassuring policy positions proved difficult. Average voters were hard-pressed to distinguish what a Goldwater foreign policy plan would entail beyond nuclear stockpiling.

For better or worse, the senator retained his vision of the role he wanted defense technology to play in the future. From his perspective the possession of powerful arms had both figurative and literal uses. "What would this world be like, if Communism ever pulled even or ahead of us in nuclear capability?," he asked a California audience. In *Where I Stand*, the answer was clear: "We

need the missiles. But we need tomorrow's missiles as well as yesterday's."[76] Perhaps to soften that stance, he offered the hope that American technological dominance would provoke ordinary people behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains to abandon their leaders.[77] If given the chance, Goldwater planned to deploy nuclear resources as prudently as he knew how. Throughout his campaign, he strenuously advocated their careful, tactical use and development and not their exponential production.

Nonetheless, his immovability on the subject of negotiation with Communist states, China's successful detonation of an atomic bomb in October, and the extremist reputation of his supporters meant Goldwater appeared overly willing to use nuclear weapons. Opponents happily furthered that supposition. For all his attempts to clarify his position on what types of weapons he favored, why, and where, he was unable to overcome the image of trigger-happy cowboy.[78] "[N]o man ever began a Presidential effort more deeply wounded by his own nomination, suffering more insurmountable handicaps. And then it must be added that he made the worst of them," wrote Teddy White in his campaign postmortem.[79] The circumstances surrounding Goldwater's often imprudent remarks were enough to escalate even a passing utterance into the realm of frightening possibility. As a political issue, the ongoing situation in Vietnam was therefore a decidedly mixed bag for the campaign. Detractors and supporters could interpret the senator's stance as either the ravings of a man determined to take the world over the nuclear brink or as a show of determination to end waste overseas.

Whatever the response, Goldwater clearly used Vietnam as a magnifying lens for the shortcomings of containment policy. He was dismayed by the Democratic administration's unwillingness to classify the protracted conflict in Southeast Asia as war. From the very outset, he invoked Vietnam as the latest example of liberals' missteps: "Yesterday it was Korea. Today it is Vietnam. We are at war with Vietnam—yet the President who is the Commander in Chief of our forces refuses to say whether or not the objective is victory."[80] If the United States was at war—and Goldwater was assured that it was—Pres. Lyndon Johnson and Sec. of Defense Robert McNamara were at fault for not fighting to win. American officials should use all troops, equipment, and arms it would take to ensure the outcome was victory. "Peace in Asia depends on our strength," Goldwater affirmed. "Nowhere in the world today is there a clearer road to *peace through strength* than in Vietnam."[81]

In addition to drawing a direct line from MacArthur and Korea to Southeast Asia, those words clearly evoked the broader idea of the United States as the sole guardian of democracy in the Pacific. By classifying Vietnam intervention as yet another armed engagement with Mao's China, Goldwater

drew on fifteen years of conservative angst about the relationship between the United States and Asian communism. "Like or not," he warned, "Communist-inspired events around the world have placed this nation in a conservative position."[82] Now, the United States once again had the chance to prove itself on a "major battlefield," where a US victory would strike a critical blow against a Chinese proxy and perhaps guarantee regional stability.[83] In sum, citizens could either cast ballots to finish the conflict quickly and decisively or remain in the holding pattern of containment.

The voters attracted to the senator's message were a more diverse group than one might assume, for his campaign mindfully cultivated an ethnic voting bloc that had been widely categorized as electorally apathetic.[84] The Cold War in Asia and the Nationalist-Communist divide demonstrated how some factions of the Chinese American diaspora were, in fact, very engaged when it came to foreign policy and politics. The established merchant class that dominated Chinatown benevolent associations and community political life was firmly in the Guomindang camp.[85] As one of the most voluble politicians in support of Taiwan, Goldwater benefitted from their endorsement. The result, as this group of Chinese American "Goldwater Girls" demonstrates, was a support base that included at least some urban minorities in addition to white suburbanites.

Although his resoluteness won Goldwater admirers, it also did much to obscure the nuances that were in fact present within his assessment of Cold War alliances. Whereas Asia Firsters through the 1950s had believed Chinese communism to be a mere offshoot of Soviet ideology, the senator in fact took into account the discord between the Soviet Union, China, and North Vietnam.[86] The problem was that advocacy of "victory" using all possible means overshadowed the more subtle components of his proposals, making it appear as if a President Goldwater would be the one to bring the entire world into nuclear warfare. The Sino-Soviet split revised previous assumptions about the Soviet "monolith," with significant consequences for the American public's receptiveness to seemingly one-dimensional Asia First anticommunism. Voters overall proved less open to the kind of alarmist rhetoric that swept Republicans to power during the Korean War election of 1952. If Ho Chi Minh was not another Kim Il-Sung, then Goldwater's foreign policy plan was ill suited to deal with this new Asian conflict, a miscalculation reflected by his emphasis on technological weaponry and discouragement of humanitarian aid.

Paired with his increasingly strident line on foreign policy, Goldwater's refusal to exclude radical activists from the conservative movement proved fatal to his candidacy. His association, however reluctant, with certain grassroots groups clearly took a toll on public opinion. His supporters were often

FIGURE 5.2. Kem K. Lee, [Goldwater Girls in Chinatown, San Francisco, 1964], Kem K. Lee Photographs and Other Materials, AAS ARC 2006/1, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley, Box 40, Fol. 25.

portrayed as "kooks, extremists, know-nothings, dopes, John Birchers, lunatics, Neanderthal types."[87] Upon hearing the GOP convention results, sports star Jackie Robinson reportedly remarked, "Now I know what it feels like to be a Jew under Hitler."[88]A somewhat hesitant figurehead, Goldwater framed his long-shot candidacy as the act of a political martyr: "Someone had to rally the conservatives, take over the Republican Party, and turn the direction of the GOP around," he recalled. "There was no one to do it but me."[89] If the American right lost the election, as he anticipated it would, wresting control of the GOP from the me-too moderates would be an excellent consolation prize.[90] However, the magnitude of the Republican defeat—52 to 486 electoral votes—meant that the right's supremacy within the party was hardly assured, and the struggle between conservatives and GOP moderates continued well after the election.[91]

The reasons behind Goldwater's loss to Johnson have been well chronicled. They ranged from his inability to satisfactorily address the civil rights movement to public fears of his plans for national security to Republican factionalism.[92] In his own words, he had been typecast as "a fascist, a racist, a trigger-happy warmonger, a nuclear madman, and the candidate who couldn't win."[93] Even some of his closest advisors wrote him off.[94] After such a blow, fundamental questions about the future of conservative internationalism arose. Was there still a place for Asia First within the right and the GOP as a whole? What role could it continue to play with potential gains to be made in the wake of a Sino-Soviet split?

Mission: Taiwan

The answers varied widely in tone if not in substance. In the House, Rep. John Ashbrook (R-OH) devoted an address to the cabal of intellectuals, journalists, and politicians that he claimed was working to overturn nonrecognition of "one of the most revolutionary and violent dictatorships the world has ever known." Resorting to the language of the 1950s, he called them the "Red China Lobby."[95] Walter Judd's 1967 Christmas letter cautioned against a divided nation as "Chinese masses" threatened to enter the war.[96] Bill Buckley took a somewhat more measured approach on his television program *Firing Line*. During a debate with Brandeis professor Max Lerner, Buckley asserted the United States should stand firm in its position on not letting China into the UN. It was "extremely risky" to depart from a long-standing policy simply because "somebody has discovered that the Soviet Union happens to be less noisy the last couple of years." Moreover there was still a strategic advantage to supporting Taiwan: "[I]t has to do with holding up some light of hope." After all, Buckley reminded the audience, there was precedent for American support of governments exiled by dictatorship—de Gaulle's France during World War II, for example.[97] Even at this juncture, the mere suggestion of a "two Chinas" policy was unacceptable. Despite what Democrats and moderate Republicans suggested, Buckley claimed any recognition of the PRC, through either UN or US channels, would be a disastrous erosion of Taiwan's status.[98]

Meanwhile, thanks to an Arizona law that dictated he could not hold on to his Senate seat while running for president, Goldwater became a private citizen for the first time since the Korean War. The period after the election found him slightly mellowed. On *Meet the Press* in June 1965, he stated that, while China was a nuclear danger, the United States should not "willy-nilly" use atomic weapons there or in Vietnam even if China entered the conflict.

"In other words, don't use a twelve gauge shotgun to kill a target that one BB will work on." For Southeast Asia, he outlined a plan that strongly resembled Taft's proposals for the Korean War: rather than ground troops, air power that spared no strategic target north of the 17th parallel.[99]

Despite adjustments in his other foreign policy positions, Goldwater still did what he could to ensure that American commitment to Taiwan did not abate. A pivotal visit to the island in 1967 cemented this pattern. Goldwater had been eager to meet Chiang Kai-shek, and he expressed that wish to various military and State Department officials. In fact, he had tried contacting Soong Mei-ling when she was in the United States but had little luck.[100] The trip was to be part fact-finding mission, part vacation with his wife Peggy. Before embarking, he studied recent State Department bulletins and extensive background reports on each country he was going to visit. Judging from the thick file of information he amassed, the recent history of US defense commitments in the Pacific was of particular interest.

During the 1950s, spurred on by the conflict in Korea, the State Department had increased its efforts in the Pacific. A flurry of negotiations yielded agreements with the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and, of course, the 1954 mutual defense treaty with Taiwan. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations supported this new direction: "It (the committee) fully appreciates that acceptance of these additional obligations commits the United States to a course of action over a vast expanse of the Pacific. Yet these risks are consistent with our own highest interests."[101] Noble words aside, the interests of American corporations (ranging from IBM to Singer Sewing to Proctor & Gamble) that profited from the island's ready labor supply and large consumer market underpinned continued US assistance to Taiwan.[102] After his trip, Goldwater planned to report back to American citizens "hungry for actual on-the-ground opinions of that part of the world."[103]

While in Taiwan, the Goldwaters received the type of welcome one would expect for the most favored foreign visitors or diplomats. Their carefully orchestrated itinerary seemed more appropriate for a head of state than an ex-senator at somewhat loose ends. It included military parades, a dinner with the Chiangs, and formal receptions.[104] Yet, the pomp and circumstance made sense in consideration of Goldwater's status as an influential Asia First conservative who had come close to the White House. He and Peggy were even presented with pilot wings signifying honorable membership in the Third Tactical Wing of the Chinese Air Force, a highly personal tribute to Goldwater's contributions during World War II.[105]

Goldwater returned home deeply moved by the experience. Three days on Taiwan convinced him American failures in Asia had forced an honor-

able and noble man from leading the way for democracy in the Pacific. "We will never forget our stay in your country or forget all that you are doing for your people," he wrote to his hosts soon after returning home. "When one visits with people like the Chinese, that is the Free Chinese, one comes away with a great feeling of encouragement about this whole world and what man can do with it if man will only realize his mistakes and resolve never to repeat them."[106] Their time together was brief, but Chiang obviously made a deep impression on Goldwater, and the latter's enthusiasm for the Nationalist leader did not abate over time. The pair exchanged gifts, birthday wishes, and extravagant compliments.[107]

The 1967 trip marked the beginning of Goldwater's deeply personal support of Taiwan. At the beginning of his career, he had followed, not led, the Asia First initiative. Now, he was determined to realize its objectives as best he could. Recovery of the mainland was of course impossible; therefore, protection of Taiwanese independence via unambiguous US policy became the primary objective. Goldwater received letters from prominent Chinese businessmen and civic leaders who encouraged him to maintain his position as a friend of the "Free Chinese." Chu Ching-tong, president of the National Federation of Certified Public Accountants, praised his contribution to "the protection of human rights and the Free World as a whole." Chu added that saving mainland China from communism also meant saving the globe from nuclear warfare, a connection the American politician would "certainly" understand.[108]

Meanwhile, conservatives of the JBS maintained unalloyed faith in Chiang's abilities, this time buttressed by the quagmire in Southeast Asia. Their interpretation of the war—that American officials lacked the will to win, outside organizations (the UN and SEATO) confused who was actually fighting the war, etc. etc.—evoked a sense of déjà vu in Robert Welch. "This is just the same old road show enacted in Korea . . . the same plot, the same management, and a very similar cast," he wrote.[109] And again, Chiang had a role to play but was being prevented from doing so: "Why, when we are asking for troops to help us from all other allies we can get, do we not ask Chiang Kai-shek to send over his half a million men?," asked Welch in 1967.[110] He took the refusal to unleash Chiang as a sure sign of subversion on the part of the Johnson administration, which was "consciously and deliberately" murdering US troops "to serve Communist purposes."[111] If Vietnam had to be fought, and Welch was not sure it was entirely necessary in the first place, Chiang and his troops should be deployed. Doing so would give the Taiwanese an opportunity to fight their moral enemies and reduce the expenditure of American lives.

Clearly, Taiwan still elicited strong emotions across the Asia First spectrum. Although they differed as to whether it would be militarily active or more symbolic, conservative leaders still believed Taiwan had a vital part to play in US Asia strategy, and any suggested changes to the island's diplomatic status would meet with a volley of responses from the right.

Divisions over Détente

The push for China policy revision came to a sudden head at the end of the decade, and with it, another round of politicization. Early in 1968, the Tet Offensive demonstrated the inability of existing US policy to contain Asian communism. By year's end, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and Chinese Premiere Zhou Enlai's denunciation of the brutal suppression made a US-PRC alliance seem all the more possible, and desirable, to members of both parties. For example, Arthur Goldberg—former secretary of labor, Supreme Court justice, and ambassador to the UN—voiced his support for seating both the PRC and Taiwan in the UN.[112] On the other side of the aisle, Nelson Rockefeller tried to use China to score political points. While the State Department tried but failed to reopen diplomatic talks with the PRC, he openly called for "contact and communication" with China as a way to highlight what the GOP presented as the Johnson administration's ineffectualness.[113]

All these contexts favored Richard Nixon, whose new White House had an opportunity to dramatically revise Asia policy. Further Sino-Soviet strife in the spring of 1969 represented the ideal moment to make possibility a reality. In April Sec. of State William Rogers announced a "two Chinas" policy that formally recognized the existence of the mainland Chinese government as a permanent entity. Just a few months later, in July, the president outlined the "Nixon Doctrine" regarding expectations for allies' contributions in the Cold War: The United States "cannot—and will not—conceive all the plans, design all the programs, execute all the decisions and undertake all the defense of the free nations of the world." The doctrine's first application would be Vietnamization of the ongoing war.

With its overhaul, the Nixon administration made a calculated decision to capitalize on two concurrent trends: demand for an end to firsthand American intervention in Southeast Asia and the public's growing receptiveness to dialogue with the PRC. "Losing" Vietnam was a probability, but the US stood to "win" the prize of diplomatic relations with Mao and China. Excitement over the latter would certainly help negate political blowback over another military loss in the Pacific.[114] Nixon had been contemplating such a strategy for some time, at least since his 1967 *Foreign Affairs* piece "Asia Policy

After Viet Nam," which urged US policy to seize an "extraordinary set of opportunities" that lay beyond Vietnam.[115]

Change proved dramatic and swift. Easing of travel and trade restrictions and an end to US patrols of the Taiwan Strait were the opening salvo. Ping-pong diplomacy, an end to the trade embargo, and the announcement of Nixon's impending trip to Beijing all occurred within a span of four months in 1971. But the real test of a two-Chinas policy came down to the admission of the PRC into the UN and whether or not PRC membership would impact Taiwan's standing within the international community. Even while stating the end of the United States' opposition to the PRC's seating, the administration expressed its support of Taiwan as a continuing member nation.[116] Its wishes went unheeded. After a week of debate, the General Assembly voted on October 25 to admit the PRC and expel Taiwan, despite American officials' attempts to marshal a majority in favor of dual representation.

For Asia Firsters, this turn of events was a waking nightmare, the realization of long-standing fears about the UN's inability to fulfill its objectives of peaceful stability.[117] In sum, the incident exemplified the workings of "world government" through which Communist and small, left-leaning states could leverage undue control.[118] Conservatives saw PRC admission as a direct threat to the independence of Taiwan, a longtime American ally, because it legitimized the mainland government as a state fit to partake in collective peacekeeping.

Moreover, the outcome of the vote directly countered the push by Nixon, Rogers, and George H. W. Bush, ambassador to the UN, for dual representation. This setback (on a position that was unacceptable to begin with) raised old dreads of UN infringement on national sovereignty.[119] To mitigate "a humiliating defeat," Walter Judd decided to reorganize the Committee of One Million Against the Admission of Communist China to the United Nations into the Committee for a Free China.[120] Bill Buckley also characterized the UN vote as "a humiliation" and pointed an accusing finger at the president: Nixon had not defended Taiwan aggressively enough and, in fact, had created the conditions for a shift in the General Assembly with his plans to visit Beijing. China developments called into question the president's ability to safeguard conservative interests in general. Although the president was the presumptive nominee in 1972, he needed to be reminded of the "vast, and slightly sullen constituency to his right that needs a little sustenance."[121]

Other prominent conservatives aired their opinions in January during a *Firing Line* special on PBS called "American Conservatives Confront 1972." In addition to Buckley, the episode's crowded panel included California governor Ronald Reagan, Clare Luce, Sen. James Buckley (R-NY, and Bill's brother),

economist Milton Friedman, John Ashbrook, and J. Daniel Mahoney (founder, Conservative Party of New York State). Their discussion began and ended with US-China relations. Luce commended Nixon for exploiting the Sino-Soviet split in service of the national interest. Reagan agreed: Rapprochement was neither a formal recognition of the PRC nor an American withdrawal from the mutual security pact with Taiwan, and Nixon knew what he was doing. The Buckley brothers, Ashbrook, and Mahoney strenuously objected, contending that the administration should have anticipated the ripple effect of détente, including Taiwan's UN expulsion. It could be difficult to discern between realpolitik and "ideological sentimentalism," Bill Buckley cautioned. Which one was this new direction on China? Friedman responded with "realpolitik" and a vote of confidence in the president's diplomatic experience, but he then quickly deferred to others on the panel.[122] Harmony on the issue proved elusive as the conversation weighed the balance between principle and strategy, and short-term setbacks and long-term gains.

Goldwater's voice was missing from that particular debate, but there was little doubt about where he stood on the matter. Party loyalty clearly colored his early comments in favor of the Republican president's China policy, and he still believed Taiwan's status would not suffer any further damage. At a GOP event in Atlanta, he declared the impending visit was not a "cozying up to Red China." Goldwater, who was back in the Senate representing Arizona after a successful 1968 campaign, instead staked a position that in hindsight sounds overly trusting, if not naive. He credited the president for attempting to discover information about a growing military power and lauded Nixon for "playing the big power game the way a nation of our importance ought to play it."

As for the American right, Goldwater believed conservatives upset with détente as a general principle had to get over themselves. His impatience was palpable: "We cannot afford to the let the old ideas about Red China keep us from opening channels of communication so that we can try and find out something about what this bandit nation is up to." Unlike Buckley, Goldwater did not hold Nixon or even the PRC responsible for China's admittance to the UN. The idiosyncrasy of world organizations in general was the real culprit. Taiwan's expulsion was "a disgrace," but it was "water over the dam." Conservatives had to stomach reality and support their president in his efforts to preserve American power in a shifting Cold War world, as well as against the impending election challenge from Democrats.[123]

Such support for rapprochement with the very government that had been Asia First internationalism's bogeyman for over twenty years was surprising, especially coming from someone who had advocated for Chiang Kai-shek

in the past. Goldwater took rounds of personal criticism from constituents who objected to Nixon's accommodation of China. One letter to the *Arizona Republic* accused the senator of ignoring how the new policy impacted Taiwan and "legitimize[d] the criminal government that enslaves the people of China." According to the irate voter, the senator no longer deserved the title "Mr. Conservative" for such acquiescence.[124]

Public addresses such as the Atlanta speech could be deceiving. Goldwater did indeed have qualms about the upcoming China visit (his use of the term "bandit nation" was lifted straight from Guomindang terminology). He was also not entirely at ease with the administration—its secrecy and distance from congressional Republicans complicated dealings with the White House. Although strained at times, a pragmatic working relationship still endured. Nixon and national security advisor Henry Kissinger made gestures of consultation with Goldwater about China. The senator accepted explanations that the PRC was still regarded as an enemy, but the 1972 Beijing trip could help end the Vietnam War and triangulation would hasten world peace. Both Nixon and Rogers had promised Taiwanese independence was not at stake.[125] Finally, common partisan bonds trumped any lingering reservations. Goldwater, a loyal GOP soldier, firmly believed conservatives had to unite behind the president on foreign policy. Nixon's Republicanism meant he should receive the benefit of the doubt. So, while the president met with Mao, toasted Zhou, and posed at the Great Wall, Goldwater continued to act the team player back home.

At least until any specifics from the trip emerged, assuaging apprehension on the right was perhaps less daunting than it looked at first. Most prominent conservatives were resigned, however grudgingly, to a two-Chinas policy. After sparring, they had agreed that Taiwan needed to remain protected by American diplomacy and defense resources. In fact, it was the president's quick avowal of Taiwan's independence that swayed figures like Goldwater and Reagan to his side.[126] Even Buckley acknowledged the necessity of realpolitik insofar as it was waged with ideological fortitude and not acquiescence to Communist demands.[127] As long as US policy clearly provided for *two* Chinas and moved slowly on any formal recognition of the PRC, a tenuous truce existed between conservatives who condemned the results of Nixon's China outreach and those who cautiously condoned it.

The Shanghai Communiqué, released on the last day of the state visit, soon upended any unified response to détente with China. The joint statement's words regarding the PRC as the sole legal government of China, Taiwan as a part of China, and the US government's pledge not to dispute that position caused major backlash from conservatives who saw it as a betrayal of an ally,

as well as a significant faction of the president's own party.[128] Buckley flatly lambasted Nixon on television: "I desire the liberation of the Chinese people from their current slave masters."[129] There was speculation about the statement's potential impact on US trade with Taiwan and Japan, Japan's future armament decisions, and a boost for unruly Third World nationalism.[130] The potential implications for Taiwanese sovereignty were just as troubling. If the communiqué was used as precedent for a formal downgrading of defense agreements with the ROC, it left the island diplomatically alienated or even susceptible to reincorporation into the mainland. Goldwater struggled to decide between support for the presidential office and his misgivings about the future of Taiwan. With some reluctance, he chose the former and got an earful from Buckley.[131]

Interlude

Such variable responses to Nixon's China policy showed how the president threw off balance political factions across the spectrum. For the right, even a symbolic opening of the door was fraught with a slew of partisan, historical, and diplomatic meanings. With so many competing impulses, conservatives whose political development had been forged in Asia First internationalism understandably reacted in mixed ways as they weighed different aspects of détente. Given all the bickering, it was easy to overlook the level of unity on realpolitik that they actually did achieve. Their loyalty to Chiang Kai-shek did not preclude them from acknowledging the necessity of a two-Chinas policy, but it did make them vigorously oppose any further erosion of Taiwan's international standing.

Conservatives' relative flexibility on China was further underscored by their absolutist reaction to Watergate. For Goldwater, who had campaigned for Nixon and vouched for him during détente, the president's lies, not to mention damage to the GOP, amounted to personal duplicity. Days after the White House refused to turn in tape recordings to the Senate investigating committee, the senator described Nixon as "sinking further and further into the line of disrespect, disbelief and uselessness."[132] Shortly before the resignation, Goldwater privately remarked, "You can only be lied to so often, and it's time to take a stand that we want out."[133]

Coming from "the conscience of the right," those words reflected conservatives' weariness with a president whose actions had tested them beyond their limits. Détente with the PRC was perhaps understandable, but the Watergate scandal was unforgiveable. The incident exacerbated the long-standing issues that had existed between the right wing of the GOP and Nixon since

the 1950s. True, the then-congressman had launched his national political career as a rabid anticommunist. However, rather than align himself with the Taft wing of the party, he angled to be vice president under the moderate Eisenhower shortly afterward.[134] His foolhardy run for the California governor's seat in 1962, which featured a bruising primary campaign against the ultraconservative Joe Shell, had further estranged him from the growing Sunbelt movement. Calling his opponent "a loser," Shell declared that a sizeable portion of the state's GOP organization would refuse to work for the "liberal" Nixon if the former vice president won the nomination. It was a prediction that held true.[135]

Doubts about Nixon's conservative credentials still lingered over ten years later and prevented already disbelieving right-wing leaders from coming to his defense during Watergate. When Buckley lamented in July 1974 that one could not take pride or have confidence in an executive like Nixon, he also meant that the soon to be ex-president was hardly a true conservative to begin with.[136] Despite the president's self-victimization at the "hands of the liberal establishment," he and the right stood far apart on key ideological fronts.[137]

On the most basic level, Watergate clearly demonstrated Nixon's lack of respect for the principle of federal balance of power. Conservatives and liberals alike could point to his administration as an "imperial presidency" that resisted any oversight, congressional or public, with the controversial justification of "executive privilege."[138] Such an attitude clashed with the GOP right's long-standing platform of constitutional originalism, and it contributed to conservatives' eventual disavowal of Nixon as any credit to their party. Years later, Goldwater told Harry Riesener of CBS News, "Mr. Nixon hurt the Republican Party and he hurt America . . . I've never gotten over it."[139]

Whatever the damage done at home, the scandal did result in one foreign policy development that was undeniably positive from an Asia First perspective. In her analysis of US-China-Taiwan relations, Nancy Tucker states that Watergate rendered rapid normalization with the PRC "impossible."[140] The political fall-out was simply too great for even Nixon's considerable diplomatic achievements to overcome.

After Nixon's resignation, Goldwater continued to advocate for Taiwan however he could. It was a difficult time for him as a conservative, for he questioned the commitment of the GOP, as led by Gerald Ford, to creating a party in which the right had an integral place.[141] The new president's commitment to preserving strong US-Taiwan relations was also in question, especially since Ford retained much of the old administration's foreign policy team, the most important signal of continuity being Kissinger as secretary of

state. During the transition, Kissinger had worked assiduously to assure Chinese officials that the path to normalization would not change just because Nixon was no longer in the White House. Mere hours after being sworn into office, Ford, presumably upon Kissinger's advice, wrote a personal letter to Mao declaring, "[N]o policy has higher priority."[142]

Ford's decision to send Sec. of Agriculture Earl Butz instead of Vice President Rockefeller to Chiang Kai-shek's funeral in April 1975 typified Goldwater's frustrations with the moderate Republican leadership. The senator was infuriated by the slight. He denounced the gesture as more than simple disrespect—its thoughtlessness was surely a precursor to formal recognition of the PRC and the abandonment of Taiwan. He created such a furor of criticism that Rockefeller ultimately led the American delegation—which included Goldwater, Judd, Sen. Hiram Fong (R-HI), and Claire Chennault's widow Anna—to Taipei.[143]

By that time, the goodwill toward China that rapprochement had built was dissolving, while mainstream media began to question why normalization was not proceeding apace.[144] Within the conservative base, the funeral episode clearly touched a nerve and illuminated lingering unease about an ambiguous China and Taiwan policy. Notes and letters from those who appreciated the stand Goldwater took flooded his office. "Chinese people will never forget what you have done for them," wrote Sister Agnes U. Higgins from a convent in Chanhua. An administrator from a Taiwanese girls' school praised Goldwater for his "way in pursuing democracy and freedom."[145] Given the near-simultaneous invasion of South Vietnam by the North, other correspondents framed the commotion surrounding Chiang's funeral as the most recent example of American failure in the entire Asia Pacific. "Our foreign policy is shambles," wrote Moses Long, a California businessman based in Taiwan. He sounded a refrain familiar to Asia Firsters: "Everything we do is done for expediency and not based on moral principles. We are so wishy washy our friends do not know where they stand. . . . We are treating the Chinese Communists like friends in the name of détente when we know full well they are the ones creating all the trouble in the Far East. We are just deluding ourselves."[146] Kissinger meanwhile informed Ford that the collapse of Saigon made any drastic changes in Taiwan policy that "implied abandonment of yet another ally" impossible.[147]

Although the defeat of South Vietnam was complete and Kissinger's shepherding of US foreign policy still boded ill for their cause, Taiwan supporters continued to find hope in Goldwater. According to one Baptist missionary, "[Y]ou spoke up and our hearts were lifted . . . It is probably too late for Viet-

nam, but perhaps we can awaken from our slumber and strengthen our support of the Republic of China." Others urged the senator to run for the White House again; some even volunteered their services straightaway.[148]

At the very least, the hubbub over Chiang's memorial service renewed Goldwater and conservatism's reputations as steadfast friends of Taiwan. Even if affinity for the Guomindang was on the wane—some months after the funeral Buckley remarkably attributed Chiang's downfall in the civil war to internal corruption rather than inadequate American support—the Asia First impulse to protect Taiwan remained intact.[149] For his part, Goldwater threatened to retract his 1976 campaign endorsement of Ford in favor of the upstart Ronald Reagan if reports of the administration's plans to recognize the PRC after the election were accurate. When the senator demanded to know the truth about the future of US-Taiwan relations, Kissinger soothed "Taiwan's staunchest supporter in Washington" by telling him what he wanted to hear. However, the sincerity of the secretary of state's placating words was questionable at best. He did the same with Huang Zen, the head of the PRC's liaison office in Washington, who was just as anxious but obviously hoping for the opposite policy outcome.[150]

The Not-So-Curious Case of *Goldwater v. Carter*

With the rise of the evangelical "Moral Majority" and issues like the Equal Rights Amendment, domestic preoccupations dominated conservatism's agenda by the end of the 1970s. With a few exceptions, foreign policy took a backseat to social morality and school busing. However, Pres. Jimmy Carter's December 1978 announcement of plans not to renew the mutual defense pact with the ROC once again brought US-Taiwan-China relations to the fore of conservative consciousness and reinvigorated the right's devotion to Taiwan security.

The president's statement that to normalize relations with China was to recognize simple reality elicited vehement responses.[151] Sen. Bob Dole (R-KS) predicted that allowing the treaty to expire would damage "the reputation of our nation within the world community" and global stability would be undermined. Bill Buckley dismissed the presumption that human rights reform would take place in China because of normalization as "romantic." The Carter administration was "long on TV, short on strategy," lamented George F. Will. Inadvertently echoing the title of Robert Welch's tome on MacArthur and Chiang, Pat Buchanan asked, "In the name of God, why?"[152]

No critic, however, was as aggressive as Goldwater. "I submit there is nothing either simple or realistic in what the President has done in the name of

peace," he retorted. The dissolution of the mutual defense treaty was an act of betrayal comparable to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and Carter's speech would be remembered as "ten minutes that lived in infamy." This was no mere reshuffling of diplomatic priorities. It was the obliteration of an entire nation: "He is saying that Taiwan has no right to exist."[153]

Such words were furious and harsh, but they were perhaps to be expected since the topic was Taiwan's international status and the target was a liberal Democrat. The senator had also been critical of Carter since the 1976 campaign, and the then-candidate's foreign policy inexperience was what Goldwater found most concerning. "I see Mr. Carter's future and I don't believe in it," he told the GOP convention that year. "This country, the United States, has never lived in an era of so much promise in the field of peace. And I don't want to see it destroyed by a man and men who know absolutely nothing about foreign policy."[154] Normalization simply confirmed Goldwater's early suspicions about the administration's diplomatic naïveté.

Regardless of what the right thought about his greenness, Carter had a committed vision for how he wanted to shape US foreign policy. A growing number of scholars argue that Carter's vision was simply ahead of its time and suffered from the contexts of the Iran hostage crisis and a national recession.[155] Douglas Brinkley has characterized Carter's approach as "a post-Cold War policy before the Cold War was over."[156] After all, it was his White House—and not Nixon's or Ford's—that managed to achieve normalization with the PRC.

Significant factors worked in Carter's favor. The PRC was still a willing diplomatic partner, since its officials were eager, if not impatient, to establish diplomatic ties as part of a drive to open up to the West to achieve modernization.[157] Just as importantly, the political climate within the United States seemed conducive to another shift in China policy. The passage of time since Nixon's Beijing trip and the incremental changes wrought by his and Ford's administrations laid the groundwork for American voters to ultimately accept the concessions necessary to make the new relationship materialize. Deng Xiaoping's 1979 cross-country tour of the United States, a public relations success, demonstrated the change in attitude toward Communist China.[158] Finally, as a Democrat, Carter was also able to avoid the intraparty divisions that had plagued his Republican predecessors and still lingered within the GOP.[159] True, there were disagreements between Sec. of State Cyrus Vance and Zbigniew Brzezinski, the national security advisor, on how best to interpret China's place in the larger Cold War. Yet, unlike the previous two presidents, Carter was able to choose which route to take and publically act accordingly.[160] The combination of all those conditions allowed his admin-

istration to announce that the United States was able to meet outright the PRC's stipulations for a formal relationship, the most vital of which was the termination of any official US presence on Taiwan.[161]

Even as all these changes occurred, Asia First continued to challenge liberals, moderates, and other conservatives who saw potential ties to the PRC as anti-Soviet measures. The recurring issue of Taiwan's sovereignty and what protections, if any, it would receive from the United States reignited Asia First conservatives' dedication to ROC independence. For his part, Goldwater was determined to vigorously preserve it regardless of the forces aligned against his goal.

No one could one accuse him of inaction even during this latter phase of his public service. He zeroed in on the mutual defense treaty's termination and launched a campaign to dispute it by sponsoring a Senate resolution amendment and writing open letters to colleagues.[162] "The issue is not a partisan one. It is not a vote of confidence in the President," he wrote, "It is an up or down vote on the Senate's historical treaty power."[163] The usual legislative channels were not his only recourse, and Goldwater did not hesitate to simultaneously use extraordinary measures. In June, he, nine other senators, and sixteen members of the House took the president to federal court.

Filed with the US District Court in June 1979, the civil suit *Goldwater v. Carter* was a mix of both past and present for Asia First conservatism. Foundational to the plaintiffs' case was the argument that the president's refusal to renew the mutual defense agreement amounted to illegal abrogation of a treaty. They alleged that Carter's unilateral decision to end the agreement "impaired their legislative right to be consulted and to vote on treaty termination."[164] Once again, US-China relations were the catalyst for renewed debate surrounding balance of power in foreign policy.

In many ways, the case strongly echoed previous anti-Yalta positions and efforts like the Bricker Amendment. *Goldwater v. Carter* also illustrated how conservatives still used the domestic stage as a platform to address their diplomatic concerns.[165] On the other hand, the case differed from earlier Asia First legislative initiatives in a number of respects. The lawsuit focused on whether or not a president had the unilateral power to *end* a foreign treaty that had been ratified by two-thirds of the US Senate. Moreover, unlike in preceding decades, the angle of anticommunism entered the discussion only obliquely.[166]

Suing the president was an unpleasant business, and Goldwater's chances of winning were slim. Nevertheless, he was willing to lose in order to prove a moral point. From his standpoint, the Constitution itself was at stake, and "as an American, I felt it had to be done."[167] Morality, or "decency, which

the President has very obviously forgotten, or never understood," had to be preserved.[168] The suit was also intended as a diplomatic gesture to show the people of Taiwan that not all American leaders agreed with Carter's foreign relations agenda. Domestic politics were not forgotten, either. In an address at the Heritage Foundation, J. Terry Emerson, plaintiffs' lead counsel, described the debate over the mutual defense treaty as a "war" for public opinion, the outcome of which would "determine whether the people, through their chosen representatives in Congress, remain supreme, or whether the Executive gains position of imperial dominance based on expediency of the moment."[169]

Dismissed without prejudice in district court in October 1979, *Goldwater v. Carter* was quickly sent to the US Court of Appeals the following month. It eventually reached the US Supreme Court, which reviewed the case via writ of *certiorari*, without oral arguments, in December 1979. The court declined jurisdiction over the matter explaining it was "not ripe for judicial review." The majority opinion written by Justice Lewis Powell argued that questions of presidential power could, and should, be addressed through congressional avenues and not through the court system. It would be embarrassing for the three branches of government to contradict one another by reaching conflicting resolutions. The court voted to dismiss by a vote of 6 to 3.[170]

Technically, those results represented a legal defeat for Goldwater. Yet, the court's dismissal was not an endorsement of presidential unilateralism. The justices expressly left the matter open for resolution by the executive and legislative branches. Even if the constitutional question of power in foreign policy remained ambiguous, by the time the Supreme Court made its decision, the immediate issue of protection for Taiwan had come to a resolution. As the case made its way through the legal system, the pro-ROC faction in Congress reasserted its voice in a more conventional manner by passing the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) in April 1979.

An effort to preserve flexible US-Taiwan relations, despite the end of official diplomatic ties, the TRA's preamble forcefully reasserted American commercial, cultural, and security interests in Taiwan.[171] Defying Carter, legislators specifically stated that the island required US support to maintain its security and they "refus[ed] to entrust the island's future to the goodwill of Washington or Beijing."[172] It was the type of safeguard Asia Firsters had not thought to demand from Nixon in 1972. In terms of specific protections, the TRA provided an option for future arms sales to the island should Taiwan's security come under duress.[173] The final vote count—339 to 59 in the House and 85 to 4 in the Senate—showed an overwhelming degree of support for an explicit commitment to Taiwan. Given those numbers, a reluctant Carter was forced to sign off on the legislation rather than risk an embarrassing veto

override.[174] Although a diplomatic sea change was well underway, and despite Goldwater's ultimate loss in court, the TRA proved a measure of continued support for the island. At the very least, it represented the type of legislative mitigation in US-China-Taiwan relations that conservatives had long sought.

As this chapter has shown, Goldwater's relationship with Taiwan was a hallmark of his conservatism. At the end of his public career, one political cartoon depicted him in a wheelchair with the Chinese Nationalist flag draped over his lap.[175] In the senator's own words, the friendship felt between Americans and the "Free Chinese" would endure, despite the efforts of certain US officials, for diplomacy was an issue that mattered, and belonged, to all citizens.[176]

Indeed, he was among the last conservative politicians who consistently used Asia to cement the right's turn toward an original internationalism. The dawn of the Reagan era signified adjustment in the tenor and direction of American conservatism as the ethical justification for interventionist anticommunism was replaced by a moral commitment of another kind. Social and cultural issues became priorities for the next version of the New Right, and Goldwater found little in common those objectives. He considered the so-called Moral Majority impudent and overreaching: "Just who do they think they are? . . . I will fight them every step of the way if they try to dictate their moral convictions to all Americans in the name of conservatism."[177] The fundamental question of what a government should and should not do created a generation gap between conservative cohorts. An older antistatism concerned with national character, but reluctant to police citizens' everyday lives, clashed with this newer impulse to legislate social morality.

While the use of government to dictate family values may have appeared to clash with the libertarian spirit of Goldwater conservatism, the two actually held much in common. For instance, both looked to federal channels to intervene in what they saw as a decline in morality. In the case of Asia First internationalism, that meant the restoration of a special friendship between the United States and Free China via defense of Taiwan's interests as America's own.

During his time as a political leader, Goldwater strove to facilitate the right's move away from literal antistatism. Much of his impetus derived from the struggle against Soviet and Asian communism, which taught conservatives of the 1950s and 1960s to embrace federal interventionism as a tool to shape both domestic and foreign policy. With the latter, the shift that Asia First imparted became patently obvious to the entire nation during Goldwater's run for president in 1964. His platform featured a marked commitment to overseas intervention unencumbered by multinational organizations like

the UN and fueled by a growing defense state. With lessons learned from 1949 China and the Korean War, conservatives extended the Asia First critique to the conflict in Vietnam.

Despite its immediate application to Southeast Asia, "Why not Victory?" was not a static slogan. By the 1970s a sort of realpolitik came to the fore as a strategy for winning the Cold War, and it replaced an earlier refusal to deal with the PRC. But this new normal for conservative internationalism hardly included Carter's version of US-China normalization. Relations with Beijing were acceptable only as long as Taiwan was independent and granted a consistent level of diplomatic recognition. Led by Goldwater, conservative officials at the end of the decade revived the saliency of Asia First in the face of normalization. They proved willing to defy executive prerogative by simultaneously using legislative means and more unconventional channels in order to safeguard a traditional alliance. The episode represented just the latest chapter of conservatism's development into a political force that helped to shape the nation's role in the wider world. That it stemmed from the fraught narrative of US-China relations seemed apropos.

When postwar conservatism reached an apogee with Ronald Reagan's administration during the 1980s, how the US-China-Taiwan issue would fare came into question. If Asia First had proven to be a useful tool to express opposition to consensus moderation, particularly against the White House, what would happen when the president himself was a Republican conservative and the right no longer needed to invoke China as it had in the past? Well into the 1980s, the political legacy of the Cold War in East Asia was still evolving.