Senator Barry Goldwater Sounds Out College Conservatism

By Dave Guttman '64

Senator Barry Goldwater spoke to a full capacity audience at Kresge Auditorium, on February 10, in an attempt to explain the basis for his own national and international policies, and to answer questions put to him by the audience, which was comprised mainly of students from MIT and surrounding colleges and universities.

From the enthusiastic response of the audience to the greater majority of the Senator's remarks and answers to questions, it appeared that college students have begun, as the senator put it, "to swing back towards conservatism" in rebellion against the obvious trend of liberalism in government in the past few years. The question is not, however, one of whether or not the Senator's remarks fell upon receptive ears, but rather how sound were the policies he espoused.

The Senator suggested, for instance, that the only way that the United States could keep peace in the world was to continue to keep up a constant air armada over the free world, even in the face of the recent achievements in the ICBM, which will soon make the airplan as obsolete for protecting the continental borders of the United States as the Sherman Tank. Let us examine this policy.

In explaining the need for a world based armada of air planes, the Senator used the analogy of Britain's use of its Navy to keep a balance of power during the era between the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the First World War. That the Senator should turn to the sixteenth century for a solution to the present problems of international war is particularly disconcerting, in light of the fact that technical advances have not only advanced the speed of warfare, but actually changed its tactics.

The Senator seems to forget, for instance, that the British Armada did more than protect the smaller nations of the world; they also gave England the right to decide for these nations what they could and could not do. This latter form of coercion is called imperialism, no matter in what spirit it is done, and, would the Senator come out of his nineteenth century study, he would take note of the fact that colonialism is on the way out. When a neutral country, such as India, looks on a map and sees the entire free world, and all of the borders of the not so free world, covered with American air and naval bases, it is hard for it to convince itself that there is not, in effect, an American Empire upon which the sun never sets. It is up to the Senator to arrive at the realization that the air armada is obsolete, or rather is rapidly becoming obsolete. A few hundred ICBM's on railroad cars and a few dozen submarines carrying Polaris missiles are more of a deterrent than dozens of pinpointable air bases throughout the world. Additionally, the air bases are a strain on our international balance of trade that has lately been playing so much havoc with our gold standard. They necessitate the support of such unpopular leaders as Franco, Trujillo, and the late Batta, whose inevitable downfalls leave a country full of revolutionaries and Communists, such as Castro, who have a basis for turning the hatred of the very people we would like to help against us. And if all this were not enough, in many countries, such as England and Japan, there has been a serious effort to get the American bases off their national soil so that the nation will not become a buffer zone in an international atomic war. In short, the Senator's international defense policy is unsound, impractical, excessively expensive, and a remnant of the past.

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