The Conscience of a Conservative

Barry Goldwater

Foreword by
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Most of these essays have been collected in the second edition of *The March of Freedom* by Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.

Foreword

Among the many analyses about the 2004 Republican National Convention, one offered by the eminent conservative columnist George F. Will caught my eye. "Barry is back," he wrote, referring to Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, who won the Republican presidential nomination forty years ago but was then crushed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in the general election, receiving only 38.5 percent of the popular vote and carrying just six states.

Notwithstanding his resounding defeat in the fall of 1964, wrote Will, Goldwater's nomination sealed "the ascendancy of conservatism in the [Republican] party." Goldwater's brand of conservatism, Will explained, included a "muscular foreign policy," economic policies of low taxation and light regulation, and a "libertarian inclination" regarding cultural questions. While not "fully ascendant" in the GOP, suggested Will, Goldwaterism made a comeback at the 2004 convention, as evidenced in the "rapturous reception" of former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, known for their unyielding opposition to terrorism and their tolerant views regarding abortion and gay rights. The reemergence of conservatism with a socially libertarian (but economically conservative) cast, Will wrote, could make the Grand Old Party more appealing to the many young suburban voters among whom the Democrats have made substantial gains.

As usual, George Will's political analysis was thoughtful and provocative, with a sense of history rarely found in today's journalists. I was particularly struck by his opening words "Barry is back" because I had already decided to write the 2004 President's Essay about the Arizona senator and his remarkable book, *The Conscience of a Conservative,* that had a profound impact on me and many other young conservatives of the 1960s.

Barry Goldwater was the grandson of a Jewish peddler from Poland who became a millionaire and the head of the largest department store in Arizona. He was a college dropout whose little book *The Conscience of a Conservative* sold over 3.5 million copies—the best-selling political manifesto of our times—and was once required reading for History 169b at Harvard University. He was a master mechanic and ham radio operator whose K7UGA MARS station patched more than 200,000 calls from U.S. servicemen in Indochina to their families back home during the Vietnam War.

He never smoked a cigarette or drank a cup of coffee but kept a bottle of Old Crow bourbon in the refrigerator of his Senate office for after-five sipping with his colleagues. He was a gifted photographer whose sensitive portraits of Native Americans and scenes of Arizona have hung in galleries around the world. He was an intrepid pilot who during World War II flew a single-engine P-47 Thunderbolt over the Atlantic to Great Britain and ferried four-engine C-54s over the Himalayas and subsequently flew more than 170 different planes, including test flights of the U-2 spy plane and the B-1 bomber.

He was a man of contradictions—inspiring and courageous, infuriating and cantankerous. He delighted in saying the unexpected and rejecting conventional wisdom but always relied upon the Constitution as his guide. He insisted that doing something about the farm problem "means—and there can be no equivocation here—prompt and final termination of the farm subsidy program." He declared that welfare ought to be "a private concern ... promoted by individuals and families, by

churches, private hospitals, religious service organizations, community charities, and other institutions." Social issues such as abortion and gay rights had not surfaced in the sixties, but Goldwater endorsed a constitutional amendment reaffirming the right of public schools to permit public prayer. Regarding the waging of the Cold War, he had a ready solution that strongly influenced fellow conservative Ronald Reagan, "Why not victory?"

He affected American politics more than any other losing presidential candidate in the twentieth century. The political historian Theodore B. White wrote, "Again and again in American history it has happened that the losers of the presidency contributed almost as much as to the permanent tone and dialogue of politics as did the winners." Goldwater was just such a candidate in 1964. Like a stern prophet of the Old Testament, he warned the people to repent of their spendthrift ways or reap a bitter harvest. Anti-communist to the core, he urged a strategy of victory over communism by a combination of strategic, economic, and psychological means, including military superiority over the Soviets and the cessation of U.S. aid to Communist governments that have used the money "to keep their subjects enslaved." He talked about the partial privatization of Social Security and a flat tax. Denounced as extremist in 1964, today such proposals are deemed mainstream.

Barry Goldwater laid the foundation for a political revolution that culminated in the election of Ronald Reagan as president in 1980 and the Republican capture in 1994 of the U.S. House of Representatives. In his memoirs, he insisted that he did not start a revolution, that all he did was to begin "to tap ... a deep reservoir [of conservatism] that already existed" in the American people. That is like Thomas Paine saying he did not ignite the American Revolution by writing his fiery pamphlet *Common Sense*.

Goldwater was absolutely fearless, challenging every shibboleth of the liberal establishment and sometimes requiring his supporters to be equally fearless. In mid-October of 1964, I was

seated on a stage of an auditorium at the University of Pennsylvania (where I was a graduate student at the Wharton School), along with the eminent professor and foreign policy expert Robert Strausz-Hupe, listening intently to presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. Suddenly some liberals, turning the principle of academic freedom upside down, lobbed a couple of tomatoes and eggs at the visiting candidate. Everyone on the stage except Goldwater ducked—he kept on talking. And I kept on supporting his candidacy because I believed in the ideas he had expressed so simply and yet powerfully in *The Conscience of a Conservative.*

As my colleague and Goldwater biographer Lee Edwards wrote, Goldwater's book, published in 1960, and only 120 pages in length, "changed American politics" because it proclaimed a major new factor in the national political debate—conservatism. In a review in the *Chicago Tribune,* George Morgenstern, the chief editorial writer for the key Midwestern newspaper, declared there was more "hard sense in this slight book than will emerge from all of the chatter of this year's session of Congress [and] this year's campaign for the presidency." Iconoclastic columnist Westbrook Pegler asserted, "Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona certainly is now the successor to Senator Taft of Ohio as defender of the Constitution and freedom." Conservative thinker Russell Kirk wrote that "if a million Americans would read his book carefully, the whole of this nation and of the world might be altered for the better."

What had Barry Goldwater (and his ghost-writer L. Brent Bozell) produced? Before answering that question I want to lay to rest a persistent myth about *The Conscience of a Conservative*—that it was entirely Bozell's work and Goldwater had little or nothing to do with it. Although only in his mid-thirties, Bozell was a senior editor of *National Review* and a seasoned writer who had written speeches for Goldwater (and before that for Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin). Starting in the fall of 1959, he began drafting a 20,000-word manuscript based on Goldwater's speeches and articles and interviews he had with the Arizona conservative. He was in frequent telephone

contact with Goldwater and every week or so would visit his Capitol Hill office with the draft of a chapter. Goldwater would scribble his comments in the margins or dictate corrections to his secretary that would be passed along to Bozell.

Goldwater and Bozell were incongruous collaborators: The easy-going Westerner and the intense Midwesterner; the college dropout and the Yale law graduate; the Jewish Episcopalian and the Roman Catholic convert; the principled politician and the activist intellectual (Bozell had run for public office in Maryland). But they shared a Jeffersonian conviction that that government is best which governs least. They looked to the Constitution as their political North Star. And they were agreed that communism was a clear and present danger.

Goldwater gave his final approval of the manuscript in late December, and Clarence B. Manion, the moderator of a highly popular weekly radio program "The Manion Forum" and the former dean of the Notre Dame Law School, undertook the publication and promotion of a book he was convinced would "cause a sensation." Indeed it did. Before *The Conscience of a Conservative* appeared, Barry Goldwater was an attractive but controversial senator from a small Western state who was at best a long-shot vice presidential possibility. After the publication of *The Conscience of a Conservative,* Goldwater became the political heir to Robert Taft, the hope of disgruntled Republicans, partyless Independents, and despairing Democrats, and the spokesman of a new national political movement—conservatism.

What had Goldwater—and Bozell—wrought? *The Conscience of a Conservative* was an original work of politics and philosophy, a vision of the nation and the world as it should be, not a compromise with the world as it was. It was a fusion of the three major strains of conservatism in 1960—traditional conservatism, classical liberalism or libertarianism, and anti-communism. It was a book by a conservative for conservatives at a time when conservatives were beginning to realize the potential of their political power.

On the very first page of *The Conscience of a Conservative,* Goldwater declared that America was fundamentally a conservative nation and that American people yearned for a return to conservative principles. He then blamed conservatives for failing to demonstrate "the practical relevance of conservative principles to the needs of the day." He would try in this book, he said, to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

He began by dismissing the idea that conservatism was "out of date," arguing that that was like saying that "the Golden Rule or the Ten Commandments or Aristotle's *Politics* are out of date." The conservative approach, he said, "is nothing more or less than an attempt to apply the wisdom of experience and the revealed truths of the past to the problems of today." He proceeded to explain what conservatism was and what it was not.

Unlike the liberal, Goldwater wrote, the conservative believed that man was not only an economic but a spiritual creature. Conservatism "looks upon the enhancement of man's spiritual nature as the primary concern of political philosophy." Indeed, Goldwater stated, the first obligation of a political thinker was "to understand the nature of man."

The senator then listed what the conservative had learned about man from the great minds of the past: (1) each person was unique and different from every other human being—therefore, provision had to be made for the development of the different potentialities of each person; (2) the economic and spiritual aspects of man's nature "are inextricably intertwined"—neither aspect can be free unless both are free; (3) man's spiritual and material development cannot be directed by outside forces—"each man," he declared, "is responsible for his own development."

Given this view of the nature of man, Goldwater stated, it was understandable that the conservative "looks upon politics as the art of achieving the maximum amount of freedom for individuals that is consistent with the maintenance of social

order." But, he said, the delicate balance that ideally exists between freedom and order had long since tipped against freedom "practically everywhere on earth" (as a result of what he later called "the Soviet menace"). Even in America, the trend against freedom and in favor of order was "well along and gathering momentum." For the American conservative, there was no difficulty in "identifying the day's overriding political challenge: it is to preserve and extend freedom."

Freedom was in peril in America, he said, because government had been allowed by leaders and members of both political parties to become too powerful. In so doing, they had ignored and misinterpreted the single most important document in American government, the Constitution, which was an instrument above all "for limiting the functions of government." The alarming result was "a Leviathan, a vast national authority out of touch with the people, and out of their control."

While deeply concerned about the tendency to concentrate power in the hands of a few, Goldwater was convinced that most Americans wanted to reverse the trend. The transition would come, he said, when the people entrusted their affairs to those "who understand that their first duty as public officials is to divest themselves of the power they have been given." It was a radical and some would say utopian statement. What public official would relinquish rather than seek more power? In perhaps the most famous passage of *The Conscience of a Conservative*—Lincolnian in its rhetoric—Goldwater said that the turn toward freedom would come when Americans elected those candidates who pledged to enforce the Constitution, restore the Republic, and who proclaimed:

> I have little interest in streamlining government or in making it more efficient, for I mean to reduce its size. I do not undertake to promote welfare, for I propose to extend freedom. *My aim is not to pass laws, but to repeal them.* (Emphasis added) It is not to inaugurate new programs, but to cancel old

> ones that do violence to the Constitution, or that have failed in their purpose, or that impose on the people an unwarranted financial burden. I will not attempt to discover whether legislation is "needed" before I have first determined whether it is constitutionally permissible. And if I should later be attacked for neglecting my constituents' "interests," I shall reply that I was informed their main interest is liberty and that in that cause I am doing the very best I can.

Here was a vision of government that aimed to restore the ideas of the Founding Fathers and throw out the welfarist plans of the modern liberals. It was what conservatives believed was still possible in America; it was what liberals believed was hopelessly antiquated and even dangerous. In the following chapters, Senator Goldwater got down to specifics, dealing with civil rights, agriculture, organized labor, taxes and spending, the welfare state, education, and communism.

Summing up his feelings about government interference in any area, he said, "I believe that the problem of race relations, like all social and cultural problems, is best handled by the people directly concerned. Social and cultural change, however desirable, should not be effected by the engines of national power .... Any other course enthrones tyrants and dooms freedom." Consistent with his principles, Goldwater had personally led the integration of the Arizona Air National Guard in 1946, two years before President Truman ordered the desegregation of the U.S. armed forces, and had been an active member of the NAACP and the Urban League in Phoenix well before he ran for public office.

Regarding farming, Goldwater pointed out that the Constitution was clear—"no power over agriculture was given to any branch of the national government." Besides, like any other industry, farm production was "best controlled by the natural operation of the free market." In the chapter on organized labor,

Goldwater (a ranking member of the Senate Labor Committee) attacked the enormous economic and political power concentrated in the hands of a few union leaders. He advocated enactment of state right-to-work laws, the limitation of contributions to political campaigns by individuals and neither labor unions or corporations, and the elimination of industry-wide bargaining, applying the principle of anti-monopoly to unions as well as corporations.

Echoing the proposals of economist Milton Friedman, whom he had known since the mid-fifties, Goldwater proposed a flat tax, declaring that "government has a right to claim an equal percentage of each man's wealth, and no more." He bluntly described the graduated tax as "a confiscatory tax."

As for government spending, he said, the only effective way to curtail it "is to eliminate the programs on which excess spending is consumed," including social welfare programs, education, public power, agriculture, public housing, urban renewal, and "all the other activities that can be better performed by lower levels of government or by private institutions or by individuals." He did not suggest that the federal government drop all these programs "overnight" but that it establish "a rigid timetable for a staged withdrawal," encouraging the process by reducing federal spending in each field by 10 percent each year. Reducing spending and taxes, in that order, would guarantee the nation "the economic strength that will always be its ultimate defense against foreign foes."

In the chapter, "The Welfare State," Goldwater conceded the strong emotional appeal of welfarism to many voters and therefore to many politicians. But it was the duty of conservatives, he said, to demonstrate the difference between being concerned with welfare problems and insisting that the "federal government is the proper agent for their solution." He demonstrated a remarkable prescience by arguing that the welfare state eliminated "any feeling of responsibility [on the part of the recipient] for his own welfare and that of his family and neigh-

bors"—precisely the argument and finding of welfare critic Charles Murray, my Heritage colleague Robert Rector, and other analysts twenty years later. It was one of the great evils of welfarism, Goldwater wrote, that "it transforms the individual from a dignified, industrious, self-reliant *spiritual* being into a dependent animal creature without his knowing it." He restated a fundamental truth for conservatives: If we take from someone "the personal responsibility for caring for his material needs, we take from him also the will and the opportunity to be free."

After listing the several harms that can be caused by federal aid to education, Goldwater, sounding much like the intellectual historian Russell Kirk, stated that the proper function of the school was to transmit "the cultural heritage of one generation to the next generation" and to train the minds of the new generation so that they can absorb "ancient learning" and apply it to the problems of today. The role of our schools, he insisted, was not to educate or elevate *society* but to educate *individuals*.

The last part of *The Conscience of a Conservative* was devoted to U.S. foreign policy and the Cold War, which, Goldwater said, the enemy was determined to win while the United States and the rest of the free world were not. We have sought "settlements," he stated, "while the Communists seek victories." He proposed a comprehensive strategy of victory that included the maintenance of defense alliances like NATO; the limitation of foreign aid to military and technical assistance to those nations "that are committed to a common goal of defeating world communism"; superiority in all weapons, military, political, and economic, necessary to produce a victory over communism; a drastic reduction in U.S. support of the U.N.; and the encouragement of the peoples under communist occupation to "overthrow their captors." America's objective, he said, "is not to wage struggle against communism, but to win it."

Risks were inevitable, Goldwater conceded, but the future would unfold along one of two paths: Either the communists would retain the offensive, ultimately forcing us to surrender

or accept war "under the most disadvantageous circumstances," or Americans would "summon the will and the means for taking the initiative and wage a war of attrition against them," seeking to bring about "the internal disintegration of the communist empire."

It was the latter course that President Reagan, with the backing of the American people, chose in the 1980s, leading the nation and the world to what Barry Goldwater had predicted—the disintegration of the Soviet empire and victory in the Cold War, both without firing a single nuclear shot.

I have selected the first two chapters as a representative excerpt of *The Conscience of a Conservative.* The reader will notice one or two outdated passages—a reference to "the aggressive designs of Moscow," the use of the long-forgotten Arthur Larson as a prototypical big-government Republican. But ninety-eight percent of Goldwater's manifesto remains relevant to our time.

As the author of *The Conscience of a Conservative* and then as a presidential candidate, Barry Goldwater insisted on addressing the key issues that have dominated the national debate for the past four decades: taxes (flatten them); government spending (work toward reducing and even eliminating subsidies, as in agriculture); Social Security (it is in actuarial trouble—strengthen it by introducing a voluntary option); law and order (the right of victims should take precedence over those of criminals); and morality in government (the president and all in public office must avoid scandal and corruption and set a good example for society).

In his 1988 memoir, Goldwater stated that his campaign for the presidency helped to broaden and deepen the conservative movement beyond "any other movement of our times." Today, he said, "conservatives come from all regions, every social class, every creed and color, all age groups. The new GOP," he wrote, "was forged in the fires of the 1964 presidential campaign." And it emerged triumphant in the 1994 congressional campaign when

Republicans captured Congress for the first time in forty years and which was based on the ideas first proposed by Goldwater—smaller government, lower taxes and spending, tougher anti-crime measures, and less Washington meddling in people's lives.

Barry Goldwater was, in the words of George Will, "a man who lost forty-four states but won the future." He placed ideas at the center of his campaign. He inspired more people, especially young people like me, to enter the world of politics and policy-making than any other losing candidate in modern times. And it all began with a little book that takes about an hour to read but whose liberating words stay with you for a lifetime.

There are several individuals behind the scenes without whose help this publication would not be possible. I am grateful to my colleague Dr. Lee Edwards for his recommendation that I use these chapters from *The Conscience of a Conservative* and his assistance in drafting the text of the foreword. Mike Needham, Jonathan Larsen, Alex Adrianson, Richard Odermatt, John Cryderman, and Drew Bond have all helped in the production of this essay. Finally, sincere thanks to all of our friends who, with their numerous suggestions and encouragement, continue to make this annual publication possible.

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President
December 2004

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Chapter One
The Conscience of a Conservative

I have been much concerned that so many people today with Conservative instincts feel compelled to apologize for them. Or if not to apologize directly, to qualify their commitment in a way that amounts to breast-beating. "Republican candidates," Vice President Nixon has said, "should be economic conservatives, but conservatives with a heart." President Eisenhower announced during his first term, "I am a conservative when it comes to economic problems but liberal when it comes to human problems." Still other Republican leaders have insisted on calling themselves "progressive" Conservatives.[1] These formulations are tantamount to an admission that Conservatism is a narrow, mechanistic *economic* theory that may work very well as a bookkeeper's guide, but cannot be relied upon as a comprehensive political philosophy.

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1. This is a strange label indeed: it implies that "ordinary" Conservatism is opposed to progress. Have we forgotten that America made its greatest progress when Conservative principles were honored and preserved.

The same judgment, though in the form of an attack rather than an admission, is advanced by the radical camp. "We liberals," they say, "are interested in *people*. Our concern is with human beings, while you Conservatives are preoccupied with the preservation of economic privilege and status." Take them a step further and the Liberals will turn the accusations into a class argument: it is the little people that concern us, not the "malefactors of great wealth."

Such statements, from friend and foe alike, do great injustice to the Conservative point of view. Conservatism is *not* an economic theory, though it has economic implications. The shoe is precisely on the other foot: it is Socialism that subordinates all other considerations to man's material well-being. It is Conservatism that puts material things in their proper place—that has a structured view of the human being and of human society, in which economics plays only a subsidiary role.

The root difference between the Conservatives and the Liberals of today is that Conservatives take account of the *whole* man, while the Liberals tend to look only at the material side of man's nature. The Conservative believes that man is, in part, an economic, an animal creature; but that he is also a spiritual creature with spiritual needs and spiritual desires. What is more, these needs and desires reflect the *superior* side of man's nature, and thus take precedence over his economic wants. Conservatism therefore looks upon the enhancement of man's spiritual nature as the primary concern of political philosophy. Liberals, on the other hand,—in the name of a concern for "human beings"—regard the satisfaction of economic wants as the dominant mission of society. They are, moreover, in a hurry. So that their characteristic approach is to harness the society's political and economic forces into a collective effort to *compel* "progress." In this approach, I believe they fight against Nature.

Surely the first obligation of a political thinker is to understand the nature of man. The Conservative does not claim special powers of perception on this point, but he does claim a familiar-

ity with the accumulated wisdom and experience of history, and he is not too proud to learn from the great minds of the past.

The first thing he has learned about man is that each member of the species is a unique creature. Man's most sacred possession is his individual soul—which has an immortal side, but also a mortal one. The mortal side establishes his absolute differentness from every other human being. *Only a philosophy that takes into account the essential differences between men, and, accordingly, makes provision for developing the different potentialities of each man can claim to be in accord with Nature*. We have heard much in our time about "the common man." It is a concept that pays little attention to the history of a nation that grew great through the initiative and ambition of uncommon men. The Conservative knows that to regard man as part of an undifferentiated mass is to consign him to ultimate slavery.

Secondly, the Conservative has learned that the economic and spiritual aspects of man's nature are inextricably intertwined. He cannot be economically free, or even economically efficient, if he is enslaved politically; conversely, man's political freedom is illusory if he is dependent for his economic needs on the State.

The Conservative realizes, thirdly, that man's development, in both its spiritual and material aspects, is not something that can be directed by outside forces. Every man, for his individual good and for the good of his society, is responsible for his *own* development. The choices that govern his life are choices that *he* must make: they cannot be made by any other human being, or by a collectivity of human beings. If the Conservative is less anxious than his Liberal brethren to increase Social Security "benefits," it is because he is more anxious than his Liberal brethren that people be free throughout their lives to spend their earnings when and as they see fit.

So it is that Conservatism, throughout history, has regarded man neither as a potential pawn of other men, nor as a part of a general collectivity in which the sacredness and the separate

identity of individual human beings are ignored. Throughout history, true Conservatism has been at war equally with autocrats and with "democratic" Jacobins. The true Conservative was sympathetic with the plight of the hapless peasant under the tyranny of the French monarchy. And he was equally revolted at the attempt to solve that problem by a mob tyranny that paraded under the banner of egalitarianism. The conscience of the Conservative is pricked by *anyone* who would debase the dignity of the individual human being. Today, therefore, he is at odds with dictators who rule by terror, and equally with those gentler collectivists who ask our permission to play God with the human race.

With this view of the nature of man, it is understandable that the Conservative looks upon politics as the art of achieving the maximum amount of freedom for individuals that is consistent with the maintenance of social order. The Conservative is the first to understand that the practice of freedom requires the establishment of order: it is impossible for one man to be free if another is able to deny him the exercise of his freedom. But the Conservative also recognizes that the political power on which order is based is a self-aggrandizing force; that its appetite grows with eating. He knows that the utmost vigilance and care are required to keep political power within its proper bounds.

In our day, order is pretty well taken care of. The delicate balance that ideally exists between freedom and order has long since tipped against freedom practically everywhere on earth. In some countries, freedom is altogether down and order holds absolute sway. In our country the trend is less far advanced, but it is well along and gathering momentum every day. Thus, for the American Conservative, there is no difficulty in identifying the day's overriding political challenge: it is *to preserve and extend freedom*. As he surveys the various attitudes and institutions and laws that currently prevail in America, many questions will occur to him, but the Conservative's first concern will always be: *Are we maximizing freedom?* I suggest we examine some of the critical issues facing us today with this question in mind.

Chapter Two
The Perils of Power

The New Deal, Dean Acheson wrote approvingly in a book called *A Democrat Looks At His Party*, "conceived of the federal government as the whole people organized to do what had to be done." A year later Mr. Larson wrote *A Republican Looks At His Party*, and made much the same claim in his book for Modern Republicans. The "underlying philosophy" of the New Republicanism, said Mr. Larson, is that "if a job has to be done to meet the needs of the people, and no one else can do it, then it is the proper function for the federal government."

Here we have, by prominent spokesmen of both political parties, an unqualified repudiation of the principle of limited government. There is no reference by either of them to the Constitution, or any attempt to define the legitimate functions of government. The government can do whatever *needs* to be done; note, too, the implicit but necessary assumption that it is the government itself that determines *what* needs to be done. We must not, I think underrate the importance of these statements. They reflect the view of a majority of the leaders of one of our parties, and of a strong minority among the leaders of the other, and they propound the first principle of totalitarianism: that the State is competent to do all things and is limited in what it actually does only by the will of those who control the State.

It is clear that this view is in direct conflict with the Constitution which is an instrument, above all, for *limiting* the functions of government, and which is as binding today as when it was written. But we are advised to go a step further and ask why the Constitution's framers restricted the scope of government. Conservatives are often charged, and in a sense rightly so, with having an overly mechanistic view of the Constitution: "It is America's enabling document; we are American citizens; therefore," the Conservatives' theme runs, "we are morally and legally obliged to comply with the document." All true. But the Constitution has a broader claim on our loyalty than that. The

founding fathers had a *reason* for endorsing the principle of limited government; and this reason recommends defense of the constitutional scheme even to those who take their citizenship obligations lightly. The reason is simple, and it lies as the heart of the Conservative philosophy.

Throughout history, government has proved to be the chief instrument for thwarting man's liberty. Government represents power in the hands of some men to control and regulate the lives of other men. And power, as Lord Acton said, *corrupts* men. "Absolute power," he added, "corrupts absolutely."

State power, considered in the abstract, need not restrict freedom: but absolute state power always does. The *legitimate* functions of government are actually conductive to freedom. Maintaining internal order, keeping foreign foes at bay, administering justice, removing obstacles to the free interchange of goods—the exercise of these powers makes it possible for men to follow their chosen pursuits with maximum freedom. But note that the very instrument by which these desirable ends are achieved *can* be the instrument for achieving undesirable ends—that government can, instead of extending freedom, restrict freedom. And note, secondly, that the "can" quickly becomes "will" the moment the holders of government power are left to their own devices. This is because of the corrupting influence of power, the natural tendency of men who possess *some* power to take unto themselves *more* power. The tendency leads eventually to the acquisition of *all* power—whether in the hands of one or many makes little difference to the freedom of those left on the outside.

Such, then, is history's lesson, which Messrs. Acheson and Larson evidently did not read: release the holders of state power from any restraints other than those they wish to impose upon themselves, and you are swinging down the well-traveled road to absolutism.

The framers of the Constitution had learned the lesson. They were not only students of history, but victims of it: they knew from vivid, personal experience that freedom depends on effective restraints against the accumulation of power in a single authority. And this is what the Constitution is: *a system of restraints against the natural tendency of government to expand in the direction of absolutism*. We all know the main components of the system. The first is the limitation of the federal government's authority to specific, delegated powers. The second, a corollary of the first, is the reservation to the States and the people of all power not delegated to the federal government. The third is a careful division of the federal government's power among three separate branches. The fourth is a prohibition against impetuous alteration of the system—namely, Article V's tortuous, but wise, amendment procedures.

Was it then a *Democracy* the framers created? Hardly. The system of restraints, on the face of it, was directed not only against individual tyrants, but also against a tyranny of the masses. The framers were well aware of the danger posed by self-seeking demagogues—that they might persuade a majority of the people to confer on government vast powers in return for deceptive promises of economic gain. And so they forbade such a transfer of power—first by declaring, in effect, that certain activities are outside the natural and legitimate scope of the public authority, and secondly by dispersing public authority among several levels and branches of government in the hope that each seat of authority, jealous of its own prerogatives, would have a natural incentive to resist aggression by the others.

But the framers were not visionaries. They knew that rules of government, however brilliantly calculated to cope with the imperfect nature of man, however carefully designed to avoid the pitfalls of power, would be no match for men who were determined to disregard them. In the last analysis their system of government would prosper only if the governed were sufficiently determined that it should. "What have you given us?" a

woman asked Ben Franklin toward the close of the Constitutional Convention. "A Republic," he said, "*if you can keep it!*"

We have not kept it. The Achesons and Larsons have had their way. The system of restraints has fallen into disrepair. The federal government has moved into every field in which it believes its services are needed. The state governments are either excluded from their rightful functions by federal preemption, or they are allowed to act at the sufferance of the federal government. Inside the federal government both the executive and judicial branches have roamed far outside their constitutional boundary lines. And all of these things have come to pass without regard to the amendment procedures prescribed by Article V. The result is a Leviathan, a vast national authority out of touch with the people, and out of their control. This monolith of power is bounded only by the will of those who sit in high places.

There are a number of ways in which the power of government can be measured.

One is the size of its financial operations. Federal spending is now approaching a hundred billion dollars a year (compared with three and one-half billion less than three decades ago.)

Another is the scope of its activities. A study recently conducted by the *Chicago Tribune* showed that the federal government is now the "biggest land owner, property manager, renter, mover and hauler, medical clinician, lender, insurer, mortgage broker, employer, debtor, taxer and spender in all history."

Still another is the portion of the peoples' earnings government appropriates for its own use: nearly a third of earnings are taken every year in the form of taxes.

A fourth is the extent of government interference in the daily lives of individuals. The farmer is told how much wheat he can grow. The wage earner is at the mercy of national union leaders whose great power is a direct consequence of federal labor legislation. The businessman is hampered by a maze of

government regulations, and often by direct government competition. The government takes six per cent of most payrolls in Social Security Taxes and thus compels millions of individuals to postpone until later years the enjoyment of wealth they might otherwise enjoy today. Increasingly, the federal government sets standards of education, health and safety.

How did it happen? How did our national government grow from a servant with sharply limited powers into a master with virtually unlimited power?

In part, we were swindled. There are occasions when we have elevated men and political parties to power that promised to restore limited government and then proceeded, after their election, to expand the activities of government. But let us be honest with ourselves. Broken promises are not the major causes of our trouble. *Kept* promises are. All too often we have put men in office who have suggested spending a little more on this, a little more on that, who have proposed a new welfare program, who have thought of another variety of "security." We have taken the bait, preferring to put off to another day the recapture of freedom and the restoration of our constitutional system. We have gone the way of many a democratic society that has lost its freedom by persuading itself that if "the people" rule, all is well.

The Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, probably the most clairvoyant political observer of modern times, saw the danger when he visited this country in the 1830's. Even then he foresaw decay for a society that tended to put more emphasis on its democracy than on its republicanism. He predicted that America would produce, not tyrants but "guardians." And that the American people would "console themselves for being in tutelage by the reflection that they have chosen their own guardians. Every man allows himself to be put in lead-strings, because he sees that it is not a person nor a class of persons, but the people at large that hold the end of his chain."

Our tendency to concentrate power in the hands of a few men deeply concerns me. We can be conquered by bombs or by subversion; but we can also be conquered by neglect—by ignoring the Constitution and disregarding the principles of limited government. Our defenses against the accumulation of unlimited power in Washington are in poorer shape, I fear, than our defenses against the aggressive designs of Moscow. Like so many other nations before us, we may succumb through internal weakness rather than fall before a foreign foe.

I am convinced that most Americans now want to reverse the trend. I think that concern for our vanishing freedoms is genuine. I think that the people's uneasiness in the stifling omnipresence of government has turned into something approaching alarm. But bemoaning the evil will not drive it back, and accusing fingers will not shrink government.

The turn will come when we entrust the conduct of our affairs to men who understand that their first duty as public officials is to divest themselves of the power they have been given. It will come when Americans, in hundreds of communities throughout the nation, decide to put the man in office who is pledged to enforce the Constitution and restore the Republic. Who will proclaim in a campaign speech: "I have little interest in streamlining government or in making it more efficient, for I mean to reduce its size. I do not undertake to promote welfare, for I propose to extend freedom. My aim is not to pass laws, but to repeal them. It is not to inaugurate new programs, but to cancel old ones that do violence to the Constitution, or that have failed in their purpose, or that impose on the people an unwarranted financial burden. I will not attempt to discover whether legislation is 'needed' before I have first determined whether it is constitutionally permissible. And if I should later be attacked for neglecting my constituents' 'interests,' I shall reply that I was informed their main interest is liberty and that in that cause I am doing the very best I can." ☎