

82. 1976

by Ford. One of these was the "Presidential option"—the decision to ground Ford at least through September, his political wanderlust permitting, and display him mostly in such dignified settings as, say, the opening of the United Nations General Assembly. The plan presumes that he will want out for one- and two-day campaign trips, but can be largely confined to quarters until a closing blitz the last two weeks or so before Election Day.

The impulse to keep Ford off the road is only one measure of the weakness of his position, another—perhaps more telling—is his heavy dependence on Jimmy Carter to defeat himself. "We're going to try and help him some," says one Ford man, with Dole presumably doing most of the helping—a task the senator warned to in an opening-night convention speech denouncing Carter as a "quick-change artist" and a "Southern

fried McGovern." The principle objectives of the attack will be to picture Carter as untried and untrifled; to yoke him to the tax-and-spend liberalism of his running mate, Walter F. Mondale, and the Democratic Congress—and if possible to drive him into losing his relentlessly smiling sandford. He struck Reagan's man Sears, for one, as a thick-skinned sort who might be "manipulated into blowing his top" and doing something ugly; the serene response from Plains in effect was don't depend on it. The demographics proposed in Ford's emerging game plan are familiarly laced with long-odds calculations. His people would concede much of the liberal Northeast and all of what Morton called "the cotton South" to Carter. They would concentrate instead on what they call a "heartland strategy," building out from Ford's perceived base in the industrial Midwest and Dole's in the Farm

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

his running mate. The ticket "could make a stab at New Jersey," one Democratic strategist conceded. But New York looks strong for Carter, and in Pennsylvania, T. Newall Wood, the state senate's GOP whip, said dismally, "We're going to get clobbered." New England likewise looked infertile for Ford, except perhaps Vermont—and, said Walter (Peanut) Kennedy, the party chairman there, "who's to say he might not need those three electoral votes?"

In the Midwest, Ford's prime target territory, the view ahead was not nearly so rosy as his heartland strategists contemplated. Michigan might ultimately be his by favorite-son sentiment, though Carter is considered the leader now, and Dole could help in the grain belt. But the ticket will have far choppier flying in such pivotal states as Minnesota, Mondale's home soil; Wisconsin, where the state GOP is in advanced disarray; Ohio, where Carter held nearly a 2-to-1 lead in a July Democratic poll, and Illinois, where Ford and Dole may have to beg a ride on the coattails of an attractive—and thus far aloof—Republican state ticket.

In the West, Ford is presumed the leader in the low-yield prairie and mountain states, if he quiets their anxieties about his farm policies; Carter was counted similarly strong in the Southwest, except possibly in Arizona. The decisive testing ground will be California, a 45-electoral-vote bonanza for the winners, and Carter is starting far ahead there despite a weak showing against Gov. Jerry Brown in the Democratic primary in June. A Mervyn Field state poll showed Ford trailing 53-33—the worst showing for any nominee

except Barry Goldwater in Field's 30 years of head counting. In the South, Ford's people talk gamely of driving Carter leftward and alienating his home constituency. "You need to make it difficult for him to be a liberal in the North and a good of boy in the South," said one senior game planner. "We're going to try to get him to choose." But the President's heartland strategy implicitly concedes most if not all of Dixie to the Georgian by birthright. The border states look hardly more promising for Ford, even Maryland, which humiliated Carter in a late primary, is thought solid for him now.

Given that terrain, the news from Kansas City was received with cool equanimity in the Democratic capitals of Washington and Plains. "This means Grids and Fritz against Dull and Dole," grumbled Democratic National Committee staffer. Carter himself had bet a dollar that Tennessee's Sen. Howard Baker would be Ford's choice for Vice President, and appeared rather pleased to have lost. He pronounced the selection of Dole "excellent," pointedly neglecting to say for whom. Neither did he seem dismayed by Ford's sudden flare of star quality on acceptance night. The President, said Carter next morning, was nothing more than the "completely dormant" choice for America accordingly was between "new leadership in the White House or no leadership."

'YOU GET OVER IT'

The Republicans by contrast dispersed in considerable alarm at their future. Ford managed to capture their party without wrecking it, there was some perfunctory talk on the outer right about bolting to a new conservative third party scheduled to convene this week in Chicago, but most of the losers in Kansas City agreed to turn to the winner. "The ride home from a losing game is always a long one," said Jim Glasgow, a Texas delegate, "but you get over it." Still, the wings were filled with hopefuls hunching defeat in 1976 and waiting for 1980. One was Baker, wounded at being bypassed for the ticket this time and openly ready for next; another was John Connally, sweeping through Kansas City with an air of availability, a candidate-size retinue of aides—and a wake of doubts occasioned by his indictment and acquittal on a bribery charge last year.

Jockeying for the future is usually restrained when a party believes that it has a present. A good many of the Republicans gathered in Kemper Arena suspected privately that they did not. Their residual hope for an upset rested on a series of contingencies—on Ford's sustaining the Presidential timbre he achieved in his speech; on his turning his shaky primary lead overnight into a big-league campaign command and finally on Carter's auto-destructing in some show of gracelessness or rage. But the odds were long, and Ford's GOP support troops an aging and decimated lot. Their most recent winner, Richard Nixon, was a nonperson in their deliberations. The old heroes they had left to parade before the convention were mostly epic losers—Al Landrum, Barry Goldwater, Nelson Rockefeller—and the suspicion was strong among them that Ford may be drifting to that pantheon of ghosts next time.

PETER GOLDMAN with THOMAS M. O'BRIEN and HAL BRUNO in Kansas City and bureau reports. Newsweek

ABORTION

Supports the efforts of "those who seek enactment of a constitutional amendment" to prohibit abortion.

DEFENSE

Calls for a "superior national defense [and a] period of sustained growth in our defense effort." Endorses construction of the B-1 bomber.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Cautions that "in pursuing détente we must not grant unilateral favors with only the hope" of future reward; commends "that great beacon of human courage and morality, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn." Reaffirms U.S. commitment, with troops, to the territorial integrity of South Korea "so long as there exists the possibility of renewed aggression from North Korea." Supports contacts, trade and normalized relations with China, but also wants to keep "commitments, such as the mutual defense treaty," with Taiwan. The Panama Canal should be "preserved as an international waterway" and in talks with Panama, the U.S. "should in no way cede, dilute, forfeit, negotiate or transfer any rights, power, authority, jurisdiction, territory or property [vital] to the U.S. and the Western hemisphere."

SCHOOL BUSING

"Segregated schools are morally wrong and unconstitutional," but "we oppose forced busing to achieve racial balances" and "favor consideration of an amendment to the Constitution forbidding the assignment of children to school on the basis of race."

AMNESTY

No plank in the platform.

GUN CONTROL

Supports the right of citizens "to keep and bear arms" and opposes "Federal registration of firearms."

HEALTH

"The Republican Party opposes compulsory health insurance." The platform maintains that such a program would "increase Federal government spending by more than \$70 billion in its first full year [and] require a personal income tax increase of approximately 20 per cent."

SCHOOL BUSING

"Segregated schools are morally wrong and unconstitutional," but "we oppose forced busing to achieve racial balances" and "favor consideration of an amendment to the Constitution forbidding the assignment of children to school on the basis of race."

AMNESTY

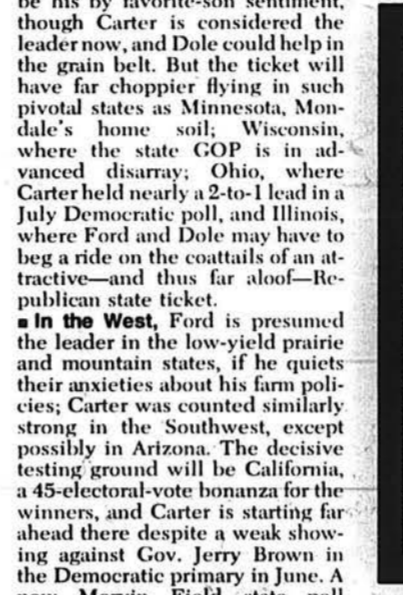
No plank in the platform.

GUN CONTROL

Supports the right of citizens "to keep and bear arms" and opposes "Federal registration of firearms."

HEALTH

"The Republican Party opposes compulsory health insurance." The platform maintains that such a program would "increase Federal government spending by more than \$70 billion in its first full year [and] require a personal income tax increase of approximately 20 per cent."



'You're all set—as soon as that heals you'll be right back in critical condition'

Pachydermitis: Could the Republicans make peace and shell Jimmy Carter?



Pachydermitis: Could the Republicans make peace and shell Jimmy Carter?

August 30, 1976

25

BY GEORGE F. WILL

IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO

Republicans, it is said, should feel like a scalloped potato, pounded thin and about to be chewed up. Certainly Carter, who claims to enjoy celestial intimacies, has created the impression that all the universe is striving toward a Carter Administration. But Carter should remember the song of that Southern skeptic, Sports Illustrated: "It ain't necessarily so." Conventions, like groves of aspen, tremble in the slightest breeze, and Republicans arrived here braced for heavy weather indoors. But in the same called Kemper Arena, and in various watering spots, rivals mingled, managing polite forbearance from signs of disgust, and calling to mind de Gaulle's description of his meeting with FDR at Casablanca: "We assaulted each other with good manners."

The Ford-Reagan battle produced the best that the GOP is a minority trying to divide itself into a majority. Actually, the fight was a splendid tonic. Far from leaving the party prostrate, it quickened its pulse, stimulated participation and kept the party on page one. And if Ford and his organization have been tempered, like steel, that is because Reagan stoked the furnace. Furthermore, Ford's principal handicap has been a faint aura of legitimacy. He came to power too easily. But campaigning across the continent has been a legitimizing ordeal.

It is not clear what yeast is quietly at work in the nation's soul. But Republicans are warring that the bread-and-butter issue is the price of bread and butter—inflation. That and other costs of government are natural Republican issues. Politics involves dressing up narrow self-interest in the fine cloth of broader motives, so theoretically inclined Republicans argue, correctly, that what costs money also costs freedom. Money is congealed labor. When government conscripts money through direct taxation or regulation or the surreptitious taxation of inflation, it conscripts the time of our lives, and limits our ability to make free claims on the world's resources.

DISPOSABLE INCOME!

The banner of Ford-Dole conservatism should be a loaf of bread and a stick of butter rampant on a field of green emblazoned with the words DISPOSABLE INCOME! The first (and sometimes it seems the only) goal of contemporary conservatism is to increase the individual's disposable income.

BANAL POLITICS

Ford's conservatism, like Macmillan's, is criticized as banal, which it is. Of course, banal politics is not the worst kind. Ford, like Macmillan, is criticized because he does not give people a "sense of purpose." Ford can reply, as Macmillan did, "If people want a sense of purpose they can get it from their archbishops." That puts politics in its place, which should not be at the center of the human drama.

SWAN AMONG DUCKS

With ten weeks to go Carter is still a political prospect of uncertain velocity. He lost eight of his last fifteen contested primaries. He was shellacked in New York and California. If Hubert Humphrey had Carter's 23-point lead in polls, the lead would be solid. Voters have had time to decide what they think of Humphrey. But a year ago 90 per cent of the public had not heard of Carter. And today, because Carter seems to believe that the way to keep knowledge pure is to keep it scarce, almost nobody knows what Carter plans to do. Thus his lead probably is soft.

HOW FORD DID IT

It was a floor fight the likes of which the Grand Old Party had not seen in a dozen years. And after nearly four hours of steadily building tension—cheers and jeers, angry shouts and even a tussle over a telephone—the moment of truth was nearly at hand for the sweaty, swirling crowd. The vote was over a procedural issue known as Rule 16C—a proposed requirement that each Presidential candidate name his running mate before the

rules and platform, the President had little choice but to put his fragile margin to the test. To assure victory, the White House pulled out all the stops. Warring delegates received last-minute phone calls from the President, others found themselves pressured by a squad of high-ranking Ford surrogates and, as the crucial vote approached, the White House command post flooded the floor with its whips to hold the line. Still, by the end of



Table with columns for STATE, REPUBLICAN, and DEMOCRATIC, listing election results for various states.

Showdown: Moore puts Ford over, loses Nofziger and Sears, tally on 16C

vote on his own nomination. But in fact 16C had become a first ballot for the nomination itself—a test of wills and forces between Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan that would decide the closest race in modern Republican history.

For the Reagan camp, 16C was a last gamble, a desperate-hours attempt to sandbag the President into naming a Veep who would alienate some Ford delegates. After appeasing the Reaganites on almost every issue during the tense pre-convention maneuvering over

the President's pre-convention efforts had been amateurish and at times abysmal. Much of the credit went to Ford's chief delegate hunter, James A. Baker III, who for months had kept what turned out to be prophetic accurate tabs on the vote. Baker's agents kept their cool, established close contact with every delegate and blended confidence with conspiracy, received last-minute phone calls from the President, others found themselves pressured by a squad of high-ranking Ford surrogates and, as the crucial vote approached, the White House command post flooded the floor with its whips to hold the line. Still, by the end of

Both candidates arrived in Kansas City on convention eve and almost immediately began working the delegates. Reagan and Schweiker were more energetic in their hunt than the President, personally visiting delegation after delegation, while the President relied largely on his attractive family (box, opposite) and a score of political operatives. But the Reagan team rarely managed to get off the defensive. In the critical Wyoming delegation, for example, once almost exclusively Reagan country, the members kept questioning Schweiker's voting record despite Reagan's explanation that over a six-year period his running mate ranked only about 40th among Senate liberals. "That made it sound like it wasn't all that bad," Mary Garman of Sundance said later. But she was still leaning toward Ford. "I guess mainly because I don't buy this Schweiker deal. Reagan turned around and did the opposite of what he said he was going to do."

ENERGETIC AND DEFENSIVE

Reagan's other problem was a growing belief among many delegates that he might end up on the ticket anyway—as Ford's Vice President. It was a notion that Ford's people were pushing hard in the caucus and on the convention floor Monday night, some because they sincerely believed that a Ford-Reagan ticket would be the party's strongest weapon against Jimmy Carter, others because it was a way of sapping the passions of

August 30, 1976

27

28

Newsweek