

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
VICE-PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS
BEFORE THE RNC RULES REVIEW COMMITTEE
SHERATON PARK HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C.
MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 1979

LET ME THANK THE COMMITTEE FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS. PERIODICALLY, THIS PROCESS GENERATES CRIES FOR REFORM FROM ACADEMICS, COMMENTATORS, AND CITIZENS CONCERNED ABOUT GOOD GOVERNMENT. THEN, PERIODICALLY, THE WHOLE THING IS PUT ON THE BACK BURNER AGAIN--TO BE FORGOTTEN UNTIL THE NEXT NATIONAL CONVENTION--OR UNTIL THE NEXT TIME A VICE-PRESIDENT SUCCEEDS A PRESIDENT.

WE ARE IN ONE OF THOSE "BACK-BURNER" TIMES RIGHT NOW. IN FACT, IT WOULD BE VERY EASY FOR THIS COMMITTEE TO FORGET THE WHOLE THING AND PASSIVELY WAIT FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF PUBLIC REACTION. I THANK YOU FOR NOT DOING THAT AND FOR FORGING AHEAD WITH A HARD, LONG LOOK AT THE RULES THAT GOVERN THE SELECTION PROCESS.

IMPORTANT BUSINESS

PICKING A VICE-PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE IS VERY IMPORTANT BUSINESS--EVEN IF PEOPLE ONLY FOCUS ON IT AT CONVENTION TIME. YOUR WORK IN THE AREA OF RULES REFORM WILL, OF COURSE, GO LARGELY UNNOTICED UNTIL REPUBLICANS GEAR UP FOR OUR NEXT NATIONAL CONVENTION. BUT THEN, YOUR WORK WILL BE THE FOCUS OF NATIONAL ATTENTION. IN MID-1980 THE REST OF THE PARTY AND THE REST OF THE NATION WILL RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT YOU ARE DOING HERE. AND MID-1980 IS NOT FAR OFF.

AS A PARTY, WE HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS AREA. AS A PARTY, WE ARE THE ONES WITH THE POWER TO MAKE THESE CHANGES--THESE REFORMS ARE WITHIN OUR JURISDICTION--THEY CAN BEST BE MADE BY CHANGING OUR OWN RULES. THE SELECTION OF A VICE-PRESIDENT IS ONE OF THE FEW AREAS WHERE OUR PARTY'S ACTIVITY IS NOT REGULATED BY STATE OR FEDERAL LAW. NOT ONLY DO WE OWE THE COUNTRY THE BEST POSSIBLE VICE-PRESIDENT--WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES. IF WE FAIL TO TAKE NEEDED STEPS TOWARD REFORM, WE INVITE OUTSIDE INTERVENTION INTO OUR CONVENTION RULES. IN A SENSE, WE ARE PROTECTING OUR OWN TURF BY PROTECTING OUR NOMINATION PROCESS FROM OUTSIDE REGULATION. WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR PARTY, TO OUR NATION, AND TO THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM TO DO ALL THAT WE CAN TO INSURE THAT THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS IS THE BEST THAT CAN BE DEvised.

ON THE OTHER HAND, AS THE INVESTIGATION INTO VARIOUS PROPOSALS LEADS YOU TO REJECT SOME OF THEM, THE COMMITTEE SHOULD DEVELOP A RECORD SUPPORTING ITS CONCLUSIONS. THIS WILL HAVE THE EFFECT OF ANSWERING FUTURE CRITICISM THAT WE WEREN'T INTERESTED IN REAL IMPROVEMENT SIMPLY BECAUSE THIS OR THAT REFORM WAS NOT ADOPTED. BUT WHATEVER WE DO, WE SHOULD NOT ABDICATE OUR RESPONSIBILITY. THAT WOULD ONLY INVITE OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE INTO THE PROCESS ITSELF.

COMPATIBLE RUNNING MATES--AT LEAST

BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE DISCUSSED VARIOUS PROPOSALS, YET NO DRASTIC REFORMS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED. ONE THING THAT HOLDS US BACK IS THE FEAR OF MESSING UP A PROCESS THAT AT LEAST PRODUCES COMPATIBLE RUNNING MATES. THIS IS THE OUTGROWTH OF A SYSTEM IN WHICH THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE PICKS THE OTHER MEMBER OF THE TICKET.

IN MY VIEW, TAKING THE POWER TO SELECT THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE AWAY FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE WOULD INVITE DISCORD AND DISSENSION INTO THE CONVENTION. IT COULD PLANT THE SEEDS OF DISINTEGRATION AT THE TOP OF THE TICKET, ENDANGERING THE UNITY OF THE CAMPAIGN AND CREATING AN ADMINISTRATION THAT WOULD BE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF. THIS POTENTIAL RIFT WOULD MEAN THAT THE VICE-PRESIDENT MIGHT BE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD WHEN IMPORTANT DECISIONS ARE MADE--LEAVING THE VICE-PRESIDENT UNPREPARED SHOULD IT BE NECESSARY FOR HIM TO TAKE OVER THE REINS OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

WHEN THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE PICKS HIS RUNNING MATE, AT LEAST THEY START OUT AS COMPATIBLE PARTNERS. IN MY VIEW, THERE IS ALREADY ENOUGH POTENTIAL FOR TENSION BETWEEN A PRESIDENT AND HIS VICE-PRESIDENT NOW--WE DO NOT NEED TO MAKE THE PROBLEM WORSE BY IMPOSING A CHOICE ON THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE. I AM STRONGLY OPPOSED, THEREFORE, TO ANY RULES CHANGES THAT WOULD TAKE THE SELECTION AWAY FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE.

A MYTH

MANY OF THE PROPOSALS THAT WOULD LIMIT THE PRESIDENT'S POWER ARE FUELED BY THE NOTION THAT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES DO NOT GIVE ADEQUATE CONSIDERATION TO THEIR SELECTION. IN MY EXPERIENCE, THIS IS A MYTH LARGELY WITHOUT FOUNDATION. HOWEVER, I CAN UNDERSTAND HOW THE VOTERS MIGHT GET THAT IMPRESSION.

FOR MONTHS PRIOR TO THE CONVENTION THE PUBLIC HEARS MORE ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE THAN IT EVER WISHES TO HEAR. ALL THE ATTENTION, ALL THE EXCITEMENT IS FOCUSED ON THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE. SUDDENLY, ON THE THIRD NIGHT OF THE CONVENTION, THAT CONTEST IS OVER. THEN, ON THE FOURTH DAY A VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE SEEMS TO SPRING UP FROM NOWHERE. THE SELECTION PROCESS MUST SEEM VERY HAPHAZARD TO THE CASUAL OBSERVER. TO HIM, IT MUST SEEM THAT THE NOMINEE GIVES LITTLE THOUGHT, LITTLE INTEREST, AND LITTLE OR NO CONCENTRATION TO THE SELECTION OF HIS RUNNING MATE.

IN FACT, ANY CANDIDATE INTELLIGENT ENOUGH TO HAVE OBTAINED THE PARTY'S NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT SHOULD HAVE THE SENSE TO REALIZE THE IMPACT OF HIS CHOICE ON THE UPCOMING ELECTION, AND ON HIS ADMINISTRATION. AN INTERESTED CANDIDATE WILL HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT THE SELECTION OF A RUNNING MATE LONG BEFORE THE CONVENTION, AND WILL HAVE COLLECTED THE REQUIRED BACKGROUND INFORMATION WELL IN ADVANCE.

OF COURSE, I AM MOST FAMILIAR WITH THE 1976 SELECTION PROCESS. IN THAT CASE, THE PRESIDENT CONTACTED A WIDE VARIETY OF PARTY LEADERS, PUBLIC OFFICIALS, AND OPINION LEADERS, AND HAD BOB TEETER DO EXTENSIVE POLLING ON PROSPECTIVE CHOICES. LIKewise, THEY OBTAINED EXTENSIVE PERSONAL FINANCIAL DATA FROM THOSE UNDER CONSIDERATION. THEN AFTER SOME POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS AND BRAINSTORMING AT THE CONVENTION, I WAS FORTUNATE TO BE THE ONE SELECTED.

IN REALITY, THERE IS LITTLE FOUNDATION FOR THE NOTION THAT VICE-PRESIDENTS ARE CHOSEN IN HAPHAZARD FASHION. MEN SMART ENOUGH TO BE NOMINATED FOR PRESIDENT ARE NOT FOOLISH ENOUGH TO WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO CONSIDER THEIR VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CHOICE.

MODEST PROPOSALS WITH MERIT

HOWEVER, THERE ARE MORE MODEST PROPOSALS WHICH I CAN COMMEND TO YOUR ATTENTION.

ONE PROPOSAL WHICH I SUPPORT WOULD CHANGE THE CONVENTION AGENDA TO PLACE THE PLATFORM DELIBERATIONS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION AND THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION. IN OTHER WORDS, ON DAY 1 WE WOULD HANDLE RULES AND CREDENTIALS, DAY 2 WOULD DECIDE THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST, ON DAY 3 WE WOULD CONSIDER THE PLATFORM, AND DAY 4 WOULD BE RESERVED FOR THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION AND THE ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES. THIS WOULD PROVIDE MORE TIME TO MAKE A FINAL CHOICE. IT WOULD ALSO CREATE A MORE SUITABLE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH TO ANNOUNCE THE SELECTION.

IN MY EXPERIENCE, THINGS HAPPEN PRETTY FAST ONCE THE DECISION IS MADE. ANOTHER DAY WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS TO AVOID CONFUSION AND PROVIDE FOR A MORE ORDERLY CONVENTION.

CHANGING THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA HAS ADVANTAGES INDEPENDENT OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL PROCESS. BY MAKING THE FINAL DECISIONS ON A PLATFORM AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE HAS BEEN SELECTED, IT WOULD LET THE NOMINEE HAVE MORE IMPACT ON THE FINAL PLATFORM DECISIONS AND WOULD PROBABLY RESULT IN A PLATFORM WHICH WAS MORE COMPATIBLE WITH THE VIEWS OF THE CANDIDATE. AT A TIME WHEN PLATFORMS ARE VIEWED SKEPTICALLY BY MOST, THIS WOULD ADD SOME CREDIBILITY TO THE DOCUMENT AS A STATEMENT UPON WHICH TO BASE THE UPCOMING CAMPAIGN.

AN ADVANCE LIST

ANOTHER PROPOSAL WHICH I MIGHT SUPPORT WOULD REQUIRE THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE TO PROVIDE A LIST, IN ADVANCE, ANNOUNCING HIS PROSPECTIVE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL SELECTIONS. THIS WOULD SUBJECT THEM TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY AND PROVIDE THE PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL WITH SOME POPULAR FEEDBACK ON HIS PROSPECTIVE CHOICES.

OF COURSE, PUBLISHING A LIST WOULD TEND TO LIMIT FLEXIBILITY, ESPECIALLY IF THE SIZE OF THE LIST WERE LIMITED BY RULE. A CANDIDATE MAY WISH TO KEEP THE SIZE OF HIS LIST FAIRLY LARGE FOR POLITICAL REASONS. BUT IF ALL CANDIDATES WERE SUBJECT TO THE SAME RULE, IT WOULD PROVIDE NO CANDIDATE WITH A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE SEARCH FOR DELEGATES.

-11-

CERTAINLY, THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE WOULD NOT LOSE AS MUCH FLEXIBILITY AS HE WOULD UNDER PROPOSALS THAT WOULD REQUIRE HIM TO ANNOUNCE A RUNNING-MATE IN ADVANCE. THIS PROCEDURE WOULD PROVIDE HIM WITH SOME FEEDBACK ON HIS PROSPECTIVE RUNNING-MATES, AND WOULD CERTAINLY APPEAR MORE METHODICAL, AND MORE RATIONAL. FOR THOSE WHO FEEL THAT ENOUGH ADVANCE CONSIDERATION IS NOT GIVEN TO THE SELECTION, IT WOULD ENCOURAGE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES TO START THEIR SCREENING PROCESS EARLY.

THE OPEN CONVENTION

ANOTHER SUGGESTION WOULD THROW THE VEEP NOMINATION OPEN TO THE CONVENTION DELEGATES--ALLOWING THEM TO MAKE THE DECISION. THAT IS CERTAINLY ONE WAY TO LIVEN AN OTHERWISE DULL CONVENTION--AND, IN MY OPINION, IT HAS CONSIDERABLE MERIT IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES, IF THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE HIMSELF WANTS IT AND FEELS THAT HE WOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE DELEGATES' CHOICE.

-12-

BUT BY FORCING AN OPEN SITUATION ON THE NOMINEE--WE WOULD RESTRICT THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE'S ABILITY TO SELECT A COMPATIBLE RUNNING MATE. AND THERE IS ANOTHER VERY PRACTICAL PROBLEM--IT WOULD BE VERY HARD TO DRAFT A RULE THAT WOULD PROHIBIT A PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE FROM SUGGESTING WHO HE MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE ON THE TICKET WITH HIM. NOTHING COULD KEEP HIM FROM MAKING A SUGGESTION. PAST EXPERIENCE WOULD INDICATE THAT THE DELEGATES ARE GENERALLY WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE'S SUGGESTION.

A RELATED SUGGESTION WOULD OPEN UP THE NOMINATION PARTIALLY--WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE SUGGESTING CERTAIN NAMES FROM WHICH A SELECTION SHOULD BE MADE. ONCE AGAIN, IT APPEARS TO ME THAT THE "PARTIALLY-OPEN" OPTION IS SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE, BUT NOT MANDATED IN ADVANCE BY THE RULES OF THE CONVENTION ITSELF.

THE MINI-CONVENTION

ANOTHER SUGGESTION INVOLVES A MINI-CONVENTION HELD TWO OR THREE WEEKS AFTER THE CONVENTION ITSELF, WHICH WOULD BE MADE UP OF A REDUCED NUMBER OF DELEGATES, OR THE MEMBERS OF THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE. THIS HAS CERTAIN OBVIOUS DISADVANTAGES--ONE BEING THE COST OF HOLDING SUCH A MEETING. LIKewise, IT WOULD TEND TO DELAY THE CAMPAIGN BANDWAGON AND WOULD TEND TO FOCUS THE PUBLIC'S ATTENTION ON THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION AT A TIME WHEN WE WANT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO FOCUS ON ISSUES AND ON OUR CAMPAIGN. SUCH A SELECTION WOULD TEND TO GIVE LESS LEGITIMACY TO THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE, SINCE THE SELECTION WOULD BE MADE BY A SMALLER GROUP THAN BY THE FULL CONVENTION. THIS COULD RAISE PROBLEMS AT SOME FUTURE TIME WHERE THE WILL OF THE CONVENTION AS A WHOLE COULD VARY SOMEWHAT FROM THE WILL OF THE MINI-CONVENTION.

-14-

HOWEVER, THERE ARE ALSO SOME ADVANTAGES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. AS WE FOUND OUT FROM THE 1972 SARGENT SHRIVER MINI-CONVENTION--THESE MEETINGS PROVIDE A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY FOR MEDIA COVERAGE. LIKEWISE, IT TENDS TO MAKE MORE OF A CELEBRITY OUT OF YOUR VICE-PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE BY FOCUSING ATTENTION ON HIS SELECTION AND MAKING HIS NOMINATION A SEPARATE NATIONAL NEWS EVENT.

IN SUMMARY, THE PROPOSAL REQUIRING AN ADVANCE LIST OF VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDERS DESERVES FURTHER STUDY, AND I SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL TO SHUFFLE THE ORDER OF THE CONVENTION AGENDA. I WOULD OPPOSE ANY PROPOSAL TO TAKE AWAY THE PRESIDENT'S POWER TO SELECT HIS OWN VICE-PRESIDENT.

INSTEAD, WE MUST FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON MODEST CHANGES THAT WOULD IMPROVE OUR SYSTEM, WITHOUT THROWING A WRENCH IN THE PROCESS. BY DOING THIS WE CAN STILL MAKE SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SELECTION PROCESS, WHICH WILL SERVE OUR NATION AND OUR PARTY WELL.

THE VICE-PRESIDENCY IS IMPORTANT, DESPITE ALL THE JOKES ABOUT IT. AS THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESIDENT MULTIPLY, THE VICE-PRESIDENT IS GIVEN A LARGER AND MORE IMPORTANT ROLE. IN ADDITION, RECENT HISTORY INDICATES THAT VICE-PRESIDENTS OFTEN SUCCEED THE PRESIDENTS. THEREFORE, WE NEED TO GIVE THIS SELECTION PROCESS SERIOUS CONSIDERATION--RECOGNIZING THE PROBLEMS WITHOUT OVERSTATING THEM, AND OFFERING MODEST REFORMS TO IMPROVE THE SYSTEM.

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

VICE-PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS

BEFORE THE RNC RULES REVIEW COMMITTEE

SHERATON PARK HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 1979

Let me thank the Committee for this opportunity to comment on the Vice-Presidential selection process. Periodically, this process generates cries for reform from academics, commentators, and citizens concerned about good government. Then, periodically, the whole thing is put on the back burner again--to be forgotten until the next national convention--or until the next time a Vice-President succeeds a President.

We are in one of those "back-burner" times right now. In fact, it would be very easy for this Committee to forget the whole thing and passively wait for the next round of public reaction. I thank you for not doing that and for forging ahead with a hard, long look at the rules that govern the selection process.

IMPORTANT BUSINESS

Picking a Vice-Presidential nominee is very important business--even if people only focus on it at convention time. Your work in the area of rules reform will, of course, go largely unnoticed until Republicans gear up for our next national convention. But then, your work will be the focus of national attention. In mid-1980 the rest of the party and the rest of the nation will recognize the importance of what you are doing here. And mid-1980 is not far off.

As a party, we have a special responsibility in this area. As a party, we are the ones with the power to make these changes--these reforms are within our jurisdiction--they can best be made by changing our own rules. The selection of a Vice-President is one of the few areas where our Party's activity is not regulated by state or federal law. Not only do we owe the country the best possible Vice-President--we owe it to ourselves. If we fail to take needed steps toward reform, we invite outside intervention into our convention rules. In a sense, we are protecting our own turf by protecting our nomination process from outside regulation. We have a responsibility to our Party, to our nation, and to the two-party system to do all that we can to insure that the Vice-Presidential selection process is the best that can be devised.

On the other hand, as the investigation into various proposals leads you to reject some of them, the Committee should develop a record supporting its conclusions. This will have the effect of answering future criticism that we weren't interested in real improvement simply because this or that reform was not adopted. But whatever we do, we should not abdicate our responsibility. That would only invite outside interference into the process itself.

COMPATIBLE RUNNING MATES--AT LEAST

Both political parties have discussed various proposals, yet no drastic reforms have been implemented. One thing that holds us back is the fear of messing up a process that at least produces compatible running mates. This is the outgrowth of a system in which the Presidential nominee picks the other member of the ticket.

In my view, taking the power to select the Vice-Presidential nominee away from the Presidential candidate would invite discord and dissension into the convention. It could plant the seeds of disintegration at the top of the ticket, endangering the unity of the campaign and creating an administration that would be divided against itself. This potential rift would mean that the Vice-President might be left out in the cold when important deci-

--MORE--

sions are made--leaving the Vice-President unprepared should it be necessary for him to take over the reins of our government.

When the Presidential nominee picks his running mate, at least they start out as compatible partners. In my view, there is already enough potential for tension between a President and his Vice-President now--we do not need to make the problem worse by imposing a choice on the Presidential nominee. I am strongly opposed, therefore, to any rules changes that would take the selection away from the Presidential candidate.

A MYTH

Many of the proposals that would limit the President's power are fueled by the notion that Presidential candidates do not give adequate consideration to their selection. In my experience, this is a myth largely without foundation. However, I can understand how the voters might get that impression.

For months prior to the convention the public hears more about the Presidential race than it ever wishes to hear. All the attention, all the excitement is focused on the Presidential race. Suddenly, on the third night of the convention, that contest is over. Then, on the fourth day a Vice-Presidential candidate seems to spring up from nowhere. The selection process must seem very haphazard to the casual observer. To him, it must seem that the nominee gives little thought, little interest, and little or no concentration to the selection of his running mate.

In fact, any candidate intelligent enough to have obtained the Party's nomination for President should have the sense to realize the impact of his choice on the upcoming election, and on his administration. An interested candidate will have thought about the selection of a running mate long before the convention, and will have collected the required background information well in advance.

Of course, I am most familiar with the 1976 selection process. In that case, the President contacted a wide variety of party leaders, public officials, and opinion leaders and had Bob Teeter do extensive polling on prospective choices. Likewise, they obtained extensive personal financial data from those under consideration. Then after some political negotiations and brainstorming at the convention, I was fortunate to be the one selected.

In reality, there is little foundation for the notion that Vice-Presidents are chosen in haphazard fashion. Men smart enough to be nominated for President are not foolish enough to wait until the last minute to consider their Vice-Presidential choice.

MODEST PROPOSALS WITH MERIT

However, there are more modest proposals which I can commend to your attention.

One proposal which I support would change the convention agenda to place the platform deliberations between the Presidential nomination and the Vice-Presidential nomination. In other words, on day 1 we would handle rules and credentials, day 2 would decide the Presidential contest, on day 3 we would consider the platform, and day 4 would be reserved for the Vice-Presidential nomination and the acceptance speeches. This would provide more time to make a final choice. It would also create a more suitable atmosphere in which to announce the selection.

In my experience, things happen pretty fast once the decision is made. Another day would be very helpful for a number of reasons, not the least of which is to avoid confusion and provide for a more orderly convention.

Changing the order of the agenda has advantages independent of the Vice-Presidential process. By making the final decisions on a platform after the Presidential nominee has been selected it would let the nominee have more impact on the final platform decisions and would probably result in a platform which was more compatible with the views of the candidate. At a time when platforms are viewed skeptically by most, this would add some credibility to the document as a statement upon which to base the upcoming campaign.

AN ADVANCE LIST

Another proposal which I might support would require the Presidential nominee to provide a list, in advance, announcing his prospective Vice-Presidential selections. This would subject them to public scrutiny and provide the Presidential hopeful with some popular feedback on his prospective choices.

Of course, publishing a list would tend to limit flexibility, especially if the size of the list were limited by rule. A candidate may wish to keep the size of his list fairly large for political reasons. But if all candidates were subject to the same rule, it would provide no candidate with a competitive advantage in the search for delegates.

Certainly, the Presidential candidate would not lose as much flexibility as he would under proposals that would require him to announce a running-mate in advance. This procedure would provide him with some feedback on his prospective running-mates, and would certainly appear more methodical, and more rational. For those who feel that enough advance consideration is not given to the selection, it would encourage Presidential candidates to start their screening process early.

THE OPEN CONVENTION

Another suggestion would throw the Veep nomination open to the convention delegates--allowing them to make the decision. That is certainly one way to liven an otherwise dull convention--and, in my opinion, it has considerable merit in some circumstances, if the Presidential nominee himself wants it and feels that he would be compatible with the delegates' choice.

But by forcing an open situation on the nominee--we would restrict the Presidential nominee's ability to select a compatible running mate. And there is another very practical problem--it would be very hard to draft a rule that would prohibit a Presidential nominee from suggesting who he might like to have on the ticket with him. Nothing could keep him from making a suggestion. Past experience would indicate that the delegates are generally willing to go along with the Presidential nominee's suggestion.

A related suggestion would open up the nomination partially--with the Presidential nominee suggesting certain names from which a selection should be made. Once again, it appears to me that the "partially-open" option is something that should be available to the Presidential nominee, but not mandated in advance by the rules of the convention itself.

THE MINI-CONVENTION

Another suggestion involves a mini-convention held two or three weeks after the convention itself, which would be made up of a reduced number of delegates, or the members of the Republican National Committee. This has certain obvious disadvantages--one being the cost of holding such a meeting. Likewise, it would tend to delay the campaign bandwagon and would tend to focus the public's attention on the Vice-Presidential selection at a time when we want the American people to focus on issues and on our campaign. Such a selection would tend to give less legitimacy to the Vice-Presidential nominee, since the selection would be made by a smaller group than by the full convention. This could raise problems at some future time where the will of the convention as a whole could vary somewhat from the will of the mini-convention.

However, there are also some advantages which should be considered. As we found out from the 1972 Sargent Shriver mini-convention--these meetings provide a tremendous opportunity for media coverage. Likewise, it tends to make more of a celebrity out of your Vice-Presidential nominee by focusing attention on his selection and making his nomination a separate national news event.

In summary, the proposal requiring an advance list of Vice-Presidential contenders deserves further study, and I support the proposal to shuffle the order of the convention agenda. I would oppose any proposal to take away the President's power to select his own Vice-President.

Instead, we must focus our attention on modest changes that would improve our system, without throwing a wrench in the process. By doing this we can still make significant improvements in the selection process, which will serve our nation and our Party well.

The Vice-Presidency is important, despite all the jokes about it. As the responsibilities of the President multiply, the Vice-President is given a larger and more important role. In addition, recent history indicates that Vice-Presidents often succeed the Presidents. Therefore, we need to give this selection process serious consideration--recognizing the problems without overstating them, and offering modest reforms to improve the system.