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## The Journal's Page of Opinion

### Interesting fight

Gerald Ford and Bob Dole vs. Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale. It's going to be an interesting battle.

Polls show that if the election were held right now, Carter would win easily, perhaps by a 60-40 margin. But that margin isn't apt to hold up. It probably will be a lot closer by November.

Ford has a lot going for him: He conveys the image of a decent, honorable man. He hasn't been a bad President, even though he hasn't been an exceptionally good one. He has shown considerable courage in his frequent vetoes of Congressional legislation. The nation is at peace and there are no wars looming on the horizon. Dole could help him nationwide with his aggressive style of campaigning and, perhaps, win back some of the disgruntled Midwest farmers since he comes from a breadbasket state and could be expected to try to help the farm belt.

And, best of all for Ford, is the fact that the nation's economy isn't in bad shape. Oh, of course, there's

still inflation and the unemployment figure is higher than we'd like, but things are better than they were.

If the economy holds up, the Democrats will lose, to a considerable degree, one of the main campaign topics upon which they were counting.

Meanwhile, Ford, as he clearly indicated in his surprisingly forceful speech at the GOP convention Thursday night, will be campaigning primarily against the Democratic-controlled Congress. And, what with sex and money scandals, Congress' reputation isn't too good.

Carter has a great personality and obviously will conduct a tough campaign. And Mondale probably will help him in the northern states.

But a lot of people are still uneasy about Carter. They aren't sure what kind of a man he really is, and they're not sure for what he stands.

He's going to have to clear up some questions during the campaign or the voters just could elect to stick with a second-hand Ford.

Carter shouldn't count his peanuts until they're harvested.

#### The Editor's Opinion



By  
John  
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Kansas Correspondent

KANSAS CITY (HNS) — The surprise of the Dole announcement is that the junior senator from Kansas has suddenly become a moderate.

By most political measures, a moderate is middle, avoids extremes and is neither intense nor excessive.

Bob Dole? The senator has said publicly that the nation's true enemies are not Washington, big government or bureaucracy, "but the liberal Democrats in Washington."

He has called Jimmy Carter "southern friend McGovern."

His wont is to slash and lash at organized labor.

He wants the B-1 bomber. He favors fatter Pentagon budgets.

He has said more than once that he agrees "with just about everything Ronald Reagan says."

What coalition?

He has sung the Ford tune, while dancing the Reagan waltz.

Gerald Ford is a conservative. Bob Dole is a conservative.

So where — in a year the Republicans have fretted to form a coalition to challenge the Democrats of the cities, the suburbs, the farms and ghettos — where does that leave the moderates, or liberals of the GOP?

In a year when Republicans worried to broaden their "base," their appeal, they were stumped by the jerking of knees.

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## Dole's prospects

All Kansans are basking in the glow of Gerald Ford's decision to tab a Kansan for a running mate.

We wonder, however, whether it will be worth it.

Bob Dole's place on the ticket could mean one thing: A mean campaign.

This isn't a niggling concern. If anything, Ford's strategists have made it clear in recent days that the running mate has to be one who can press the

## Suddenly, Dole's a moderate



The Ford-Dole balloons go up. (UPI Photo)

Ronald Reagan, the spoiler, stymied hopes for a "broader base."

Reagan forced Ford and his moderate pals to the right. Reagan sounded primary campaign issues, not Ford. It was Ford who defended, answered, dodged to defend more and finally, played presidential. But it was too late.

Ronald Reagan had needed, Ford wheeled. The Reagan challenge was impressive even in the end. Ford was humbled to seek the Reagan blessing of Dole, which he knew he could get.

How broad are the Ford-Dole politics? What is their future base?

Former Kansas Lieutenant Governor Dave Owen says Dole is a fiscal conservative, but a moderate overall.

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## Other editors say

"He votes very conservatively on economics, but there's nobody who champions the cause of the handicapped like Bob Dole. So I would say he's a moderate". Owen was Dole's 1974 campaign manager and Ford's 1976 central states coordinator.

On the record

Kim Wells, of Dole's staff, says the senator's reputation as a conservative is undeserved.

"If you look at his voting record I don't think you can say he is a conservative," Wells said.

Wells helped write the food stamp legislation that Dole sponsored with Sen. George McGovern, D-N.D.

Wells says Dole and his senior

Kansas senator, Jim Pearson, vote alike on many issues, but Pearson is considered the liberal, and Dole the conservative.

Pearson has stayed away from the battle of the convention's conservative trenches. He was not a delegate.

He is not of the Reagan-Dole line. He says he will help the Ford-Dole ticket.

But the true tides flow in the home precincts, where voters may mull 2 questions:

1. Can the Ford-Dole forces court enough wounded party liberals for a joint and spirited campaign against Jimmy Carter?

2. Will the campaign be presidential or political?

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## At first blush

When Richard Nixon picked Gerald Ford as vice-president to succeed Spiro Agnew, reports from Grand Rapids were of the general tenor:

"He did what?"

Much of the same reaction was heard in Hutchinson when President Ford asked the Republican party to nominate Sen. Bob Dole as his running mate.

"A prophet is not without his honor, save in his country and in his own house." Same way with politicians.

It also is true that familiarity breeds a certain disenchantment.

All of which suggests that Kansans, who know Dole best, should withhold judgment in Ford's selection and let the initial dismay cool a while. It may turn out better than we feared. That's what happened with Ford.

For the present, this selection demonstrates 2 things:

1. Ronald Reagan was dead right in urging that delegates, and the public, know about a presidential nominee's vice-presidential pick before the convention balloting. (He was dead wrong, of course, in waiting until convention week to bring the reform to a head.)

2. Those uncommitted who have been wavering between Carter-Mondale and what was expected to be a

Ford-Baker, or even a Ford-Reagan, ticket will have a much easier time in deciding now. — Hutchinson News

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Topeka Capital-Journal  
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## Kansas, Dole in spotlight

By KEN PETERSON  
Staff Writer

KANSAS CITY — Kansas is on the map now, a sleepy state delegate said in the early morning hours following the conclusion of the Republican National Convention.

And for Kansas, convention week was a time of triumph, surprise and embarrassment. It also raised some interesting political questions at home.

Perhaps the most embarrassing moment was Thursday night when Kansas couldn't cast a unanimous vice-presidential ballot for native son Bob Dole.

One of four Ronald Reagan delegates abstained from the vote, an action Gov. Robert F. Bennett explained indirectly to the convention as exemplification of the state's "rugged individualism."

No amount of last-minute personal pleading by top Reagan strategists could sway Mrs. Betty Hanicke of Westwood to change her mind and the Kansas count for Dole was 33 with one abstention.

But then one of the deciding factors in President Ford's selection of Dole must be linked to the fact that the state's junior senator served all week as the Republican who sought to weld the Ford-Reagan factions together.

Dole was a Ford delegate, but was conciliatory to both Ford and Reagan forces. His efforts to bind the party

together were obvious as far back as the state convention when he praised both candidates.

Dole described himself as a "bridge" between Ford and Reagan forces in platform committee hearings a week before the convention opened.

The committee authored a conservative platform that would offend neither candidate. Much of it was directly attributable to Dole's work.

Ford probably chose Dole as a compromiser, one to heal whatever divisiveness remains between Ford and Dole or the Reagan supporters.

"Let us not be deterred or discomfited by those who interpret the long-and-hard-fought primary campaign as a sign of division in Republican ranks,"

Dole said in his acceptance speech.

"Let us rather take pride in the knowledge that the battle was honorably waged — and honorably won. Let us rather take pride in the fact that we had two such men as President Ford and Gov. Reagan to contend for this nation's leadership."

The text of the acceptance speech was laced with marked-out words and phrases. State Republicans generally agree the speech wasn't an outstanding one and that Dole didn't present it with the most eloquent of styles.

Dole can be caustic, acidic and biting. He undoubtedly will be the one to slice into the Democratic ticket with

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no-holds-barred comments.

"Dole was a good hatchetman for Nixon when Dole was national chairman," observed Dwight Sutherland of Lawrence, a Reagan delegate. "He can certainly draw on the disaffected conservatives. He's sort of a good political fighter."

The political punches Dole is known to possess were most obvious when he spoke Monday evening as temporary convention chairman, three days before he learned at almost the last minute he would be the party's vice-presidential candidate.

"As we look back on the convention held in New York last month — with its smothered voices and missed opportunities and quiet capitulation to a force it hardly understood — we cannot fail to be sympathetic as we consider that we have two candidates supremely qualified to occupy the highest office in the land, and they have none at all," he said. "Throughout the Democratic primaries, the candidates had much to say about each other's inadequacies — and we could agree with everything they had to say."

Dole said he would be afraid to stand on the Democratic platform, much less run on it.

"I'm surprised our regulatory agencies haven't looked into it," Dole said. "It's a waste. It tilts so far left that any of us would slide off. But worse than that, it is a collection of deceptions."

He later described Jimmy Carter as a mass of contradictions.

"Where I come from, trust is something to be earned. In the meantime, I think we ought to cut the cards. We've had the New Deal, the Fair Deal and now somebody wants to give us a fast deal that would surely end in an ordeal," Dole said as temporary chairman.

Ford campaign workers in Kansas say they believe Dole — wearied by the rigors of his prominent role in convention proceedings — will emerge in a couple weeks ready to do battle with the Democrats. They hope he will come out slugging.

Dole and his Democrat counterpart, Sen. Walter Mondale of Minnesota, already have indicated their willingness to debate one another, a possibility that could hold far more excitement than a debate between Ford and Carter. Mondale, too, is known for his biting comments. Dole has promised not to be personal in the campaign, arguing it will be a "lofty" one. That doesn't preclude him from hammering away at the Democrats en masse, however.

Dole's ascent to the vice-presidential spot on the GOP ticket may secretly delight Kansas Democrats. While they naturally want Carter to win in November, a Republican victory means Dole will be out of their way in Kansas.

State Democrats two years ago viewed Dole as the last vestige of the Republican stranglehold on Kansas, and they almost succeeded in knocking him off.

Dole survived Dr. Bill Roy's challenge by slightly more than 13,000 votes out of almost 600,000 votes in the 1974 election, or 2 per cent of the vote.

Although Dole would be succeeded by another Republican — since the governor appoints a successor to fill the vacancy if the Ford-Dole ticket wins in November — Dole largely would be out of the way in Kansas politics.

Bennett, who was a Ford delegate, could resign from office and allow Lt. Gov. Shelby Smith to appoint him to Dole's seat. Bennett's only comment on the subject of possible succession was that many Kansans are qualified to be a U.S. Senator and he would consider each one if such a decision became necessary.

If the governor does appoint himself, Democrats could embark on an all-out offensive to take the Senate away from Republican control. Even Republican leaders acknowledge Bennett is vulnerable at home.