

Political Lineup Pits Weaknesses

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CHICAGO—From the synthetic opulence of Miami Beach and the tawdry reality of Chicago, those also-rans of other years, Richard Milhous Nixon and Hubert Horatio Humphrey, come forth this week to begin their campaign for the Presidency of the United States, weighted with enough encumbrances to make George Corley Wallace think he really might win.

In all probability, Wallace will not. But looking back at the circumstances of their nomination, it is hard to see how Nixon or Humphrey can win either. Consider the negatives each man carries into his campaign.

Both Second String

NEITHER NIXON nor Humphrey was his party's most popular candidate. Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller was the stronger Republican and Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy the strongest Democrat, but for reasons that seemed good and sufficient to the delegates, they were passed over.

Neither Nixon nor Humphrey was able to develop strong first-choice support in the delegations of the two largest states, California and New York. Nixon was shut out by Gov. Ronald Reagan in California and took only four votes from Rockefeller in New York. Humphrey finished fourth among the California delegates—trailing McCarthy, Sen. George McGovern and even the Rev. Channing E. Phillips—and managed to eke out only the barest majority—96 of 190 votes—in the New York delegation.

Neither Nixon nor Humphrey was able to enlist the strongest men for the vice presidential nominations. McCarthy, McGovern and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy refused to run with Humphrey. Rockefeller, Reagan and New York Mayor John V. Lindsay vetoed themselves—or were vetoed by others—as running-mates for Nixon. The ultimate choices for second place on the tickets—Gov. Spiro T. Agnew of Maryland and Sen. Edmund F. Muskie of Maine—though men of ability, are virtually unknown to the public and come from states of minimal political weight.

To complete this catalogue of negatives, neither man and neither party platform offered the voters a clear alternative to the Vietnam policy that cost President Johnson so much pub-

lic support that he was forced to abandon his own hopes of re-election. Both Nixon and Humphrey pledged to make peace in Vietnam their first priority as President but neither specified how he would redeem his promise or why he was more likely to succeed than Mr. Johnson.

It is hardly surprising, in this situation, that each party rests its hopes for victory principally on the weakness of the other.

Damaging Convention

LEAVING THE Conrad Hilton Hotel in Chicago, where he had run a "listening post" for the Nixon campaign, Colorado's Republican Gov. John A. Love remarked Thursday: "This thing (the Democratic convention) has been worth several million votes to us."

A few hours later, a top labor union politician stood on the convention floor shaking his head in disbelief as the permanent chairman, House Majority Leader Carl Albert, tried to gavel down the singing of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," which began as a tribute to the late Robert F. Kennedy by his supporters in the International Amphitheater and turned into another symbolic protest of the iron-handed rule of the convention.

The union man was asked if he saw any hope that the party could be rallied from its visible ruin in time for the coming campaign. "We have one secret weapon," he said, "Nixon. If anyone can glue this mess back together, it is Nixon."

The unionist was referring to the theory—really, almost a cliché among Democratic politicians—that, however angry they may be at each other, all Democrats will lend a hand to defeat the man they call "Tricky Dick."

The theory worked, barely, in 1960, when the implausible alliance of Boston and Austin, of Kennedy and Johnson, of Walter Reuther and the Southern conservatives produced just enough votes to bar Nixon from the White House.

It worked again in 1962 when California's divided Democrats forgot their feuding long enough to give Nixon a gubernatorial drubbing so severe that many thought his political career had been ended.

It may be good for a third round, but there are some who believe the old potion is losing its punch. From all visible evidence, Nixon is entering this campaign in a stronger position than Humphrey.

No New Scars

IF MANY REPUBLICANS were disappointed by the Nixon-Agnew ticket, they were not as embittered or discouraged as the Democrats leaving Chicago this weekend. The Republicans ended their ideological warfare in 1964 and this year's convention in Miami Beach saw none of the searing debate or unchecked emotional outbursts that have so badly scarred the Democrats.

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In the long run, however, it may prove true, as Humphrey said in his acceptance speech, that the Republicans merely "papered over differences with empty platitudes." Many who watched the Miami Beach proceedings came away with the impression that Nixon had postponed his hard choices of program and political strategy because he feared the risks of confronting them.

But patch jobs and postponements may serve to get Nixon through the next two months until election day in better condition than Humphrey, who finds nearly half his party clearly opposed to his stand on Vietnam.

Last weekend's reports from the Gallup and Harris organizations agreed that Nixon led Humphrey across the Nation, though the 10-point difference in the reported margins (Gallup gave Nixon a 16-point lead and Harris showed a 6-point advantage) was large enough to raise questions again about the validity or stability of the polls.

The Key States

IN THE "BIG Seven" states, with 210 of the 270 electoral votes needed for victory, where Nixon and Humphrey will concentrate their campaigns, private polls and politicians' judgments give this picture as the campaign begins:

Nixon starts with a definite lead in

Illinois, Ohio and Texas, with 77 electoral votes. He probably must be considered the early favorite to take California's 40 votes as well. The almost complete disaffection from Humphrey among the major factional leaders in the California Democratic Party will make it difficult for the Vice President to carry that state.

In the other three states—New York, Pennsylvania and Michigan—with 93 electoral votes, Humphrey starts on a near-parity with Nixon.

The choice of Muskie, a Polish Catholic from Maine, on the Democratic ticket should bolster Humphrey's position in New England and the Northeastern industrial states, just as the selection of Agnew, a Greek Episcopalian from Maryland, should strengthen Nixon's position in the border and mid-Atlantic states.

Nixon would appear to hold a clear advantage in the Mountain States and the Midwest, unless Humphrey can expand his local boy appeal beyond South Dakota and Minnesota into neighboring areas.

Count Wallace In

OVERALL, NIXON would enter the race a clear favorite if this were a two-man campaign. But these calculations reckon without Wallace—and that, it is increasingly evident, is a serious mistake.

With Republican and Democratic

positions on Vietnam indistinguishable to the naked eye and common sense analysis, the main issue in the campaign will plainly be law and order—and that is the issue Wallace has pushed harder than anyone else in American politics.

The choice of Agnew, who is identified as an advocate of a firm line against demonstrators, was widely interpreted as an effort by Nixon to combat Wallace's appeal outside the Deep South states.

Some of the canniest politicians in the Democratic Party disagree flatly with those who saw nothing but political damage from the bloody confrontations here last week and assert that the tough tactics of Mayor Richard J. Daley's police could help the party by ridding it of its reputation for being "soft" on demonstrators.

Thus, in one way or another, both parties are frantically devising schemes to slow down Wallace. But the fact is that no one has any experience in dealing with a third party movement of Wallace's dimensions and all stratagems are prone to backfire.

This year, neither major party has come up with a ticket that stirs even its normal adherents to enthusiasm. This year, there is a third party candidate of great and growing appeal. This year, there could be no decision on election day, no candidate who wins the requisite 270 electoral votes.

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Hell-bent for election.