

Nixon-Johnson Inc. ^{Post 11-10-68}

President-Elect Agrees to Accept Incumbent's Plan to End War

By Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

AN UNPRECEDENTED transition partnership between Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon is now being formed to bring the Vietnam war to an end, with the outgoing and incoming Presidents acting in unique unison.

Over the protest of some Republican hawks, including a few of his own advisers, Nixon has agreed to accept all major parts of President Johnson's plan to end the war.

Specifically, this may well require a personal Nixon trip to Saigon, not to make an on-the-spot appraisal as President-elect Dwight Eisenhower did in Korea in 1952 but to warn South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu and Saigon hawks that they cannot get any better deal from Nixon than from President Johnson.

Hawks close to the President elect — such as Texas Sen. John Tower, chairman of the Nixon "key issues" committee—are deeply suspicious of this highly unusual partnership. But other Nixon advisers, including shrewd, tough-minded Rep. Melvin Laird of Wisconsin, have strongly pushed the idea.

Laird-style pragmatists want to see the war ended, or at least the Paris negotiations making serious progress, before Nixon takes over as President. They are counseling Nixon and the war-hawks to forget all about the bitter campaign-end dispute over whether Mr. Johnson called a bomb halt prematurely to advance Hubert Humphrey's election prospects.

If Nixon enters the White House with the Paris talks tied up in knots as they are today, the war will be on his back and a Nixon-style settlement will risk political divisions at home that might never heal. As for Mr. Johnson, he wants peace as the

capstone of his Administration.

Thus the unique partnership. If it breaks down, in the words of one Nixon intimate, "it'll make the next four years hellish for Nixon."

Nixon Woos HHH

AN APPROACH through veiled intermediaries is now being made by Nixon to the man he squeaked by in last week's election — Hubert H. Humphrey. Nixon wants Humphrey in some capacity, possibly Ambassador to the United Nations, not just as a token of bipartisanship in foreign policy but to dramatize Nixon's intention to run a coalition government.

Humphrey will undoubtedly say no, but the mere fact that Nixon is sounding him out shows the direction of his thinking.

Another turndown to Nixon is certain to come from Thomas E. Dewey, top choice as of today for Secretary of State. Wall Street lawyer Dewey, out of public life for 20 years, is regarded by Nixon as the most efficient executive in the Republican Party, just right to streamline the State Department—a goal that John F. Kennedy also worked hard, but failed, to reach.

A Dewey refusal leaves William W. Scranton, as we have reported, still the best bet for Secretary of State.

But if the name of Dewey on the top of Nixon's Cabinet list is surprising, other names are scarcely less so. Two defeated Democrats — Gov. John King of New Hampshire, who lost his Senate race, and Sen. Mike Monroney of Oklahoma, defeated for re-election — are under consideration for high posts.

So is retiring Texas Gov. John Connally.

As for the job of Attorney General, which Nixon made a whipping-post in his campaign, two Minnesota Republicans are under study: Clark MacGregor and Albert Quie.

Rafferty Drag

POLITICIANS of both parties agree that one reason Richard M. Nixon's big lead in California deteriorated so badly was the constant repetition of a Nixon television spot endorsing right-wing Republican Max Rafferty for the Senate.

Nixon had made the spot, in which he said he needed Rafferty in the Senate, in early September, as part of a private arrangement. In return for Nixon helping Rafferty against Democrat Alan Cranston, Gov. Ronald Reagan would raise money not only for Rafferty but for Nixon. What Nixon never anticipated was that Rafferty, in desperate trouble, would run the Nixon endorsement non-stop and keep off the TV screen himself.

The result was that Rafferty, a big loser, helped drag down Nixon, in the opinion of some of his managers, as much as 300,000 votes.

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