



United Press International

President Ford at the White House last night. During his televised news session, he told of high-level changes.



The New York Times/Tyrone Dukes

Vice President Rockefeller answering a question during an appearance here Sunday on a television program.

NYTimes NOV. 4 1975 Moves Can Help and Hurt Ford

By R. W. APPLE Jr.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3—The temptation is to say that Vice President Rockefeller's decision not to accept the Vice-Presidential nomination next year has solved one of President Ford's chief problems. That was an interpretation encouraged by officials of the President Ford Committee, one of whom said that "the biggest millstone is off the President's neck now," and some politicians appeared initially to agree.

But the events of the last several days will have wide and subtle ramifications, and many of them may be unfavorable to the President. Trying to

gauge them all immediately, as Senator Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina said, is "like trying to pick up all the feathers from a busted pillow."

Mr. Rockefeller's decision removed from the 1976 Vice-Presidential competition a man whom the Republican right never forgave, despite his latter-day stylistic and policy changes, for his divisive tactics in 1964 and his espousal of big Government during his long tenure as Governor of New York.

Representative John Ashbrook, the conservative Ohio Republican who challenged President Nixon in 1972, said that the withdrawal would hurt the chances of former Gov. Ronald Reagan of California "because part of Reagan's appeal was the possibility that

Rockefeller would be on the ticket."

Governor Reagan said in Florida, where he was campaigning in anticipation of the announcement of his White House candidacy the week of Nov. 17, that Mr. Rockefeller's decision would help President Ford with some Republicans and hurt him with others, but that voters ultimately decided on the basis of the Presidential, not the Vice-Presidential, nominee.

As for himself, he added, "I'm certainly not appeased."

Many other conservative Republicans commented that, taking the Rockefeller development in its full context, they were unimpressed and thought that Mr. Ford had gained little.

Continued on Page 25, Column 3

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

They made the following points:

¶Mr. Rockefeller's disclosure came too late to swing conservatives behind Mr. Ford, because the conservatives now know that Mr. Reagan, after a long period of indecision, has committed himself to run, and he has always been their man.

¶The dismissal of Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger revealed Mr. Ford's true foreign policy instincts, and the appointment of Lieut. Gen. Brent Scowcroft to head the National Security Council shows that Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger remains in a dominant position. Together, the two developments mean that détente, which the conservatives dislike, is entrenched policy.

¶The handling of the entire matter conveyed a picture of an Administration in disarray, especially when coupled with two major resignations in recent weeks from the President Ford Committee. "You can generally follow the rule that whenever they screw up over there we're helped," said John Sears, Mr.

Reagan's campaign manager, "and the White House has screwed up royally this weekend."

Not all Republicans were willing to go that far, but several suggested that Mr. Ford's mantle of incumbency and leadership had been further frayed by the startling developments within his Administration. More and more, they suggested that the competition for the Republican nomination resembles the usual competition in a party out of power.

Connally Sees Advantage

The situation is now far more fluid, with Mr. Ford able to dangle the prospect of the Vice-Presidency before a number of people to enlist their support. A man who has seen that game played before, former Governor John B. Connally of Texas, said in a telephone interview from New Hampshire:

"He is going to have to get organized to take advantage of it, but if he can, this gives the President many new options and strengthens his hand immeasurably."

Among those whose names immediately sprang to politicians' minds as potential Vice-Presidential choices were the two Tennessee Senators, Wil-

liam E. Brock 3d and Howard H. Baker, George Bush, who has just been chosen to head the Central Intelligence Agency, and Elliot L. Richardson, the Ambassador to London.

Few politicians, including the conservatives, expected Mr. Ford to choose an out-and-out conservative. One remarked that "when you get out from under A, you don't go to Z, you go to L or M or N."

Anger of Moderates

If the President wins the nomination, he will be able to choose his runningmate without worrying that he will divide the party by either retaining or dumping Mr. Rockefeller. He will be able to weigh carefully the state of his own party, the composition of the Democratic ticket, which will already have been chosen, and the mood of the electorate.

But to win the nomination, he will have to contend with a Reagan campaign that — if the private comments of its strategists are any guide — senses that even before an announcement — it has forced Mr. Ford onto the defensive.

He will have to contend with a John Connally who tells associates that Mr. Reagan and Mr. Ford might knock each

other out, leaving him an opening. And he will have to contend with a possible challenge from the Republican moderates.

Their anger at Mr. Rockefeller's decision, which some of them thought Mr. Ford had prompted, was suggested by Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the minority leader. In 1976, he said, "we better damn well have a balanced ticket."

Senator Charles McC. Mathias, Republican of Maryland, who suggested last week that he might mount a challenge to the President if he faltered in the New Hampshire Presidential preference primary, said he was more convinced than ever that "somebody has to move" from his wing of the party.

Rockefeller Race Possible

The "somebody," Republican politicians were saying yesterday, just might be Mr. Rockefeller, a man whose career indicates that he seldom gives up. Those who read his letter to Mr. Ford made much of the fact that, while praising the President for his "courage, resolution, and forthrightness," made no commitment to support his candidacy next year.