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## Word From 'Middle America'

One of the most spectacular—and potentially most significant—aspects of Tuesday's election was the strong comeback of the Democratic party right across the country's heartland. Most of Middle America—geographically speaking—almost solid Nixon country in 1968, turned almost solidly against the President's party in 1970.

On results alone, the Nixon-Agnew campaign had greater response on the Northeastern seaboard than Barry Goldwater dreamed of sawing off from the rest of the country than it did between the Alleghenies and the Rockies. If the voters of these states were considered mainstays of the Silent Majority, the President and Vice President cannot be happy at what most of them said at the polls.

Of twelve states in this region that provided Mr. Nixon with 127 of his 301 electoral votes in 1968, all but four will have Democratic Governors in January. Two of the four Republicans—in Indiana and Illinois—were holdovers, probably fortunate that they did not have to run for re-election this year.

The capture of governorships and other state offices left a pattern of Democratic statehouse power across Middle America matched in this century only after Franklin Roosevelt's landslides of 1932 and 1936.

Politicians are already talking of John J. Gilligan, the 49-year-old Governor-elect of pivotal Ohio, as future Presidential or Vice Presidential timber. He and others among the gubernatorial victors in the area are Democratic liberals in the Roosevelt-Truman-Kennedy mold.

Minnesota's Wendell Anderson, only 38, is a protégé of Hubert Humphrey and leader of a rejuvenated Democratic Farmer-Labor coalition. Patrick J. Lucey, 52, is a progressive in the best Wisconsin tradition, whose election along with a Democratic State Assembly majority may save the University of Wisconsin from destruction at the hands of the Legislature.

Here and there the Administration could find consolation to the pattern. Iowa re-elected a Republican Governor. Michigan's Gov. William G. Milliken may scrape through against a Democratic sweep that brought a Negro into statewide elective office for the first time. Representative Robert Taft Jr. bucked the Gilligan tide to win his father's old Senate seat in Ohio, and Senator Roman Hruska survived a stiff challenge in Nebraska.

But who would believe South Dakota overturning its Republican Governor and filling both its House seats with Democrats? Who would have predicted that Senator Quentin Burdick would withstand the Nixon-Agnew blitz to win 62 per cent of the vote in North Dakota? Who, in fact, would have anticipated a lineup of Democratic Governors embracing both Dakotas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Arkansas?

The news from Middle America is clear: The Democratic patient has made good recovery from its 1968 setback thus reinvigorating the two-party system.