



Associated Press

His candidate needed "a northern connection" (Mr. Sears being interviewed in Los Angeles yesterday)

Bold Reagan Tactician

John Patrick Sears 3d

By JON NORDHEIMER

It was an Entebbe-like strike, deep inside enemy territory, a lightning-quick action designed to snatch the prize while the opposition was caught flat-footed and

Man
in the
News

confounded. The capture of Senator Richard S. Schweiker of Pennsylvania, a liberal even by

Democratic standards, by the conservative forces of Ronald Reagan was a daring stroke to give the candidate a foothold in the more moderate ranks of the Republican Party.

Mr. Reagan was the commander-in-chief who signed the orders, but his chief of staff originated the plan and worked out the details of the attack, and he is a man who is widely acknowledged to be one of the best political operatives in either party, John Patrick Sears 3d, national manager of the Reagan campaign.

That reputation might be confirmed or shattered in the days ahead as the full impact of the Schweiker coup on the fight for the Republican nomination becomes clearer.

It was Mr. Sears who became convinced in recent weeks of the need for a "Northern connection" to sell the conservative former Governor of California to the more moderate elements of the party.

It was a daring gamble, like the recent Israeli raid to free hostages at the Ugandan airport at Entebbe. And it was the 36-year-old Mr. Sears who convinced Mr. Reagan and Mr. Schweiker

that the great risks to their futures involved in such a coupling of political opposites were worth taking.

In the boisterous world of American politics, where flamboyance and backslapping are cherished attributes, John Sears is a reserved and low-keyed figure, who uses his lawyer's training and gifts of persuasion to move people gently through a process of reason, sometimes to conclusions they previously resisted.

'One-on-One' Man

"John is the best one-on-one communicator in political matters in the country today," says James Lake, Mr. Reagan's press secretary, who in early 1974 was one of the emissaries to enlist Mr. Sears in the Californian's planning for the 1976 election. "I've seen him sit down with persons with a view 180 degrees away from his, and by the time the meeting ended they were champing at the bit to go to work for him."

Mr. Sear's political reputation was established early in his career. In 1966, as a 26-year-old lawyer in a New York law firm, his political savvy impressed one of the senior partners who happened to have a certain unrequited fascination with the Presidency, Richard M. Nixon. So Mr. Sears became a full-time advance man and strategist for Mr. Nixon's new bid for the White House and was the executive director of the Nixon for President Committee from June 1967 until the election victory.

In the first Nixon administration he was a special White House counsel and because the chief liaison between the President and the Republican National Committee, overseeing to a large part the patronage network that is one of the most important tasks confronting any new administration.

Mr. Sears, however, fell out of favor with the triumvirate that in the first year of office succeeded in dominating the inner circle around Mr. Nixon — John Mitchell, H.R. Halde- man and John Eirlichman.

"Sears was a guy who believed good relations with the press was an integral part of any successful administration, but he ran into a group of men who fed Nixon's fears of the press," and a former insider in recalling the struggle between the conservative and more moderate elements in the early Nixon White House.

A White House counsel who genuinely enjoyed the

company of reporters at late-night watering holes clearly was destined for problems with the men inside the White House, Mr. Sears was forced out of his job before 1969 was over. It was later disclosed that he was among 13 White House staff members who had their phones tapped between May 1969 and February 1971 on the orders of Administration officials. ✕

Mr. Sears regrets what he calls a major miscalculation he made about Mr. Nixon in their early political collaboration that led both men to the White House and said this about the former President: "I saw that he had deep personal insecurities, along with great strengths, but I believed that once he was finally President he could act with more confidence and assurance. Instead the insecurities became more pronounced."

Born July 3, 1940, on a fairly prosperous dairy farm outside Syracuse, he gained his Republicanism from his father, who traced his family back to the first settlers in North America, and his Catholicism, from his mother, whose family came to this country during the potato famine in Ireland. He was deeply affected at age 10 by the death of his father in a farm accident, and was reared by his mother and three older sisters.

After attending Christian Brothers Academy in Syracuse, he went to Notre Dame University to study chemistry in preparation for a career in psychiatry. But in the last year at Notre Dame he managed a friend's successful campaign for senior class president, and has never really left the world of politics since then. He earned a law degree at Georgetown University.

Mr. Sears is reserved, almost to the point of shyness, and rarely shows emotion outside of soft laughter. He does crossword puzzles "to keep verbal," but outside of the flood of newspapers, memos and paperwork that cross his desk he does very little reading. He maintains that scholarly people spend all their time absorbing the ideas of others and spend little time thinking for themselves.

"He is cool, an unflappable and has a great capacity to size other people up," says a close associate. "In that way he's never really abandoned his wish to be a psychiatrist."

*See Facts on File, Vol. 2, p. 46, footnote col. 2; Vol. 3, p. 240 E1.