

(680) PMS BUDGET

KENNEDY-POLITICS

AN AP NEWS ANALYSIS

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WASHINGTON, NOV. 22 (AP)-THREE YEARS AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF HIS PRESIDENTIAL BROTHER, SEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY IS RIDING AN UNCERTAIN CREST OF POLITICAL POPULARITY.

SINCE THE DALLAS TRAGEDY, THE NEW YORK SENATOR HAS CARVED OUT FOR HIMSELF AN AMBIVALENT POLITICAL POSITION IN WHICH HE STANDS BOTH WITH AND AGAINST PRESIDENT JOHNSON.

THAT THIS IS LEADING HIM TOWARD AN EVENTUAL BID FOR THE PRESIDENCY FEW ARE WILLING TO DENY. BUT THE TIMING AND CIRCUMSTANCES FOR ANY SUCH BID APPARENTLY REMAIN UNCERTAIN QUANTITIES TO THE SENATOR HIMSELF.

KENNEDY IS ON RECORD AS SAYING HE EXPECTS TO SUPPORT JOHNSON FOR RE-ELECTION IN 1968, THAT HE WILL NOT SEEK THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL JOB NOW HELD BY HUBERT H. HUMPHREY AND THAT HE EXPECTS TO BID FOR RE-ELECTION TO THE SENATE IN 1970.

TAKEN AT FACE VALUE, THIS LEAVES ONLY ONE OBSCURE ALTERNATIVE FOR ENTRY INTO THE LISTS BEFORE 1972--THE BARE POSSIBILITY THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON MIGHT NOT SEEK RE-ELECTION TWO YEARS FROM NOW. THE KENNEDYS, IT MIGHT BE NOTED, OVERLOOK FEW POSSIBILITIES.

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WHILE THE CURRENT POLLS POINT TO KENNEDY, WHO WAS 41 LAST SUNDAY, AS POSSIBLY THE MOST POPULAR INDIVIDUAL DEMOCRAT, SUCH POPULARITY MAY NEED A GREAT DEAL OF BOLSTERING TO KEEP ITS FLAG FLYING HIGH AS THE YEARS TEND TO DISSIPATE THE WAVE OF SYMPATHY FLOWING TOWARD HIM BECAUSE OF HIS BROTHER'S MURDER.

AS POLITICIANS VIEW HIS FUTURE, KENNEDY WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE TO CHISEL OUT INDIVIDUAL POSITIONS ON THE MAJOR ISSUES OF THE DAY.

THIS IS A POLITICALLY DELICATE PROCESS. IT DOES NOT ALLOW MANY CASUAL MISTAKES SUCH AS HIS OFF-THE-CUFF OBSERVATION AT BERKELEY, CALIF., LAST MONTH THAT HE DOESN'T BELIEVE THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIET NAM WANT PREMIER NGUYEN CAO KY.

CRITICS IMMEDIATELY ACCUSED KENNEDY OF TRYING TO UNDERCUT JOHNSON AT A CRITICAL POINT.

ALTHOUGH KENNEDY HAS BECOME SOMETHING OF A HERO TO DEMOCRATIC

LIBERALS BECAUSE OF HIS DISSENT TO JOHNSON POLICIES; THE NEW YORK SENATOR HAS BEEN CAREFUL TO LIMIT HIS SUGGESTIONS PRIMARILY TO CALLS FOR WIDER EFFORTS TO GAIN PEACE IN ASIA.

HE GUESSED WRONG IN HIS CONDEMNATION OF JOHNSON'S ACTION IN SENDING TROOPS TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. HE SINCE HAS RETREATED TO THE POSITION THAT FREE ELECTIONS THERE "RECTIFIED THE DAMAGE" OF U.S. INTERVENTION.

HE NUDGED THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION FOR GREATER EFFORTS TOWARD GETTING A NONPROLIFERATION NUCLEAR TREATY AT A TIME WHEN IT WAS WORKING ABOUT AS DILIGENTLY AS IT KNEW HOW IN THAT DIRECTION.

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KENNEDY TOOK THE POSITION IN MIDYEAR THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD DROP ITS OPPOSITION TO ADMISSION OF COMMUNIST CHINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, SO LONG AS NATIONALIST CHINA WAS NOT THROWN OUT. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS SHOWN A RECENT WILLINGNESS TO HAVE THIS MATTER STUDIED.

HE HAS OPPOSED THE SALE OF U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. HE HAS ADVOCATED MUCH GREATER ECONOMIC SPENDING THERE THAN JOHNSON HAS BEEN WILLING TO PROPOSE.

MOST OF KENNEDY'S OWN PROPOSALS HAVE CALLED FOR GREATER SPENDING AT HOME AND ABROAD. HE HAS SUPPORTED NEARLY ALL OF JOHNSON'S "GREAT SOCIETY" PROGRAMS AND BACKED THE PRESIDENT ON LABOR LEGISLATION.

AND HE HAS SAID THAT VIET NAM WAR SPENDING MUST NOT DELAY THE ANTIPOVERTY PROGRAM. HE HAS VOTED FOR GREATER APPROPRIATIONS THAN THE PRESIDENT ASKED FOR EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELFARE.

KENNEDY'S VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA, HIS SPEECH IN OXFORD, MISS., AND HIS ESPOUSAL OF NEGRO MIGRATION TO THE SUBURBS HAVE PUBLICIZED HIS ADVOCACY OF CIVIL RIGHTS.

HIS CAMPAIGNING FOR DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES, MANY OF WHOM DIDN'T WIN ON NOV. 3, DREW LARGE AUDIENCES WITH MANY STARRY-EYED YOUNG ADMIRERS WHO WILL BE OLD ENOUGH TO VOTE SOON.

WITH ALL OF THESE ACTIVITIES, KENNEDY HAS FOUND TIME TO VISIT MORE THAN A DOZEN FOREIGN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING VIET NAM. MORE OF THESE EXCURSIONS ARE IN ORDER AS HE DOCUMENTS EXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

ALL IN ALL, HE HAS PROVED HIMSELF A GO-GO YOUNG MAN WHOSE DIRECTION-FINDER IS TRAINED ON THE POLITICAL PEAKS. ONLY TIME WILL TELL IF HE HAS THE CORRECT SIGHTING.

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