

Evans and Novak

Daley Slams Door on Bobby for '68; Mayor Sends Word He Will Back LBJ

WASHINGTON—Any lingering temptation for Sen. Robert F. Kennedy to challenge President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968 was ended when a red light was flashed by the Democratic Party's single most powerful state leader: Mayor Richard J. Daley of Chicago.

Mayor Daley dispatched unequivocal word to Sen. Kennedy, through intermediaries, that his monolithic Illinois organization did not want Sen. Kennedy to run against the President and, furthermore, would oppose him in any showdown between the two. That completely convinced Sen. Kennedy's political advisers that Sen. Kennedy could not be nominated, an appraisal central to Sen. Kennedy's public reiteration last Tuesday that he would not run for president.

Before last Tuesday, a handful of Sen. Kennedy's most trusted political lieutenants had been making a discreet state-by-state check of party leaders to determine their loyalties, an operation not initiated by the senator but not discouraged by him either.

The results were mixed. Sen. Kennedy would control New York and have an excellent shot against Mr. Johnson in the California primary election. Ohio and Pennsylvania were divided. Michigan state leaders (including officials of the United Auto Workers) discouraged a Kennedy bid but did not rule out supporting him if he actually ran.

Illinois was the clincher. One of Sen. Kennedy's closest political associates contacted a lieutenant in the Daley organization. He was informed that Illinois, which under Mayor Daley's leadership was one of John F. Kennedy's earliest and most important 1960 strongholds, would be for Lyndon Johnson all the way no matter what Bobby Kennedy did. And without Illinois Sen. Kennedy would be a long-shot at best for the nomination.

A footnote: Academic supporters and members of Sen. Kennedy's own Senate staff who want him to oppose Mr. Johnson have not completely surrendered. They still feel he would suffer less in the long run even if he lost the nomination to Mr. Johnson, a loss they



30 EVANS AND NOVAK

JAN. agree would be probable.

* * *

Top officials in Washington concede privately that the success of the Viet Cong rampa all over South Vietnam v dates in large part Comm boasts of deep subversion the Saigon regime.

Those boasts were r fall at Bratislava, Czr kia, when members tional Liberation F cal arm of the Vir with radical new the United State

Claiming one-gime had beer NLF represe a coordinated sive directed Vietnamese The assault ful, they Viet Cong combed t gime.

Only v be resp of the belief stance Saigo brear polic ing icy cor re w th v