

Reagan, Says a Strategist, Had to Make Move to Left

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LOS ANGELES, July 27 — Ronald Reagan's chief campaign strategist today defended the selection of Senator Richard S. Schweiker of Pennsylvania as the Californian's running mate as a "tough" decision necessary to broaden Mr. Reagan's appeal to win both the Republican nomination and the November election.

John P. Sears 3d said that Mr. Reagan had to look to his left to gain adherents because he had already captured the right wing of the party. And he said that the move would put pressure on President Ford to designate his Vice-Presidential choice "and end the game that he would somehow get Ronald Reagan to run with him."

The selection of Mr. Schweiker, a two-term Senator with a liberal and pro-labor voting record, caused initial "gripping" among some conservative supporters, Mr. Sears acknowledged, "but today they are starting to think it isn't such a bad idea after all."

Mr. Sears said that he and

Mr. Reagan had agreed that it would be wiser "to take the heat from the conservatives" three weeks before the Republican National Convention in Kansas City than to win the nomination by a narrow vote and then try to deal with a fight from the right wing of the party over the Vice-Presidential choice.

But other top Reagan aides indicated that they believed that the decision to pick Mr. Schweiker was a gamble that Mr. Reagan had to make now to get the nomination as he saw Mr. Ford slowly gaining the upper hand in the hunt for uncommitted delegates.

Mr. Reagan was secluded at his ranch above Santa Barbara today, making telephone calls of reassurance to conservatives in key states, telling them that the presence of Mr. Schweiker on the ticket did not represent a sellout of principle.

Mr. Reagan "wanted to get that reaction out of the way now," Mr. Sears went on, "because the political reality is

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that Senator Schweiker can help us beat Carter in the fall. It would be awful to come out of the convention with this kind of bickering.

"The conservatives can make their decision now and not later," he said in a telephone interview from Washington. "If push comes to shove they can't say we didn't tell them soon enough."

While the extent of the conservative reaction was not clear, Mr. Sears indicated that one immediate trouble spot might be in Mississippi.

"Frankly," he said, "Mississippi was not looking too hot for us before this. If we lose something there it was something that already was troubling us."

The selection of Senator Schweiker, he continued, was inevitable because of the strength he added to a Reagan ticket, especially among Northern Ethnics, blue-collar workers and Jewish voters. "I don't think we can come up with a better ticket," he added.

Mr. Sears also acknowledged that the decision had been prompted by concern over the closeness of the race for the nomination, even though he had recently contended that Mr. Reagan was assured of 10 more than the 1,130 delegate votes needed for nomination.

"There has always been the danger and a significant one, that in the race we were in we could lose it narrowly," he asserted. "There is no doubt now, after this move, that anyone's delegate count is going to be viewed with skepticism. In passing, it knocks the stuff-

ing out of the vandy or all delegate counts."

Connally Criticized

The announcement today by John B. Connally of Texas that he would support the President was brushed aside by Mr. Sears as a measure of the Texan's disappointment at not being selected by Mr. Reagan.

"He's been campaigning for this job for about a year," Mr. Sears remarked. "The political reality is that he would not have brought anything to the ticket. He can't help beat Carter in the South, where he is seen as a turncoat Democrat. Of course, he still has Watergate all over him. The truth of the matter is that John Connally is a phenomenon of the press and his own wits, and he has no constituency outside of a few friends in Texas."

It was learned that the candidate himself had serious reservations about Senator Schweiker's philosophy until the two men spent six hours together in talks last Saturday at Mr. Reagan's hilltop home in Pacific Palisades.

"After the meeting the Governor decided that on the basic philosophical thrusts they were not that far apart," said Michael Deaver the candidate's chief of staff.

Reactions Tested

Mr. Deaver said that before the decision was announced yesterday it was made known to key supporters around the national to test their reactions.

"When they got over the initial shock they saw the Governor was holding to principle on this. At the same time everyone agreed it was a risk we have to take," Mr. Deaver said.

Mr. Deaver said that the introduction of Mr. Schweiker,

*Jimmy Carter announced his choice of Sen. Walter Mondale for vice president 15 Jul 76.

with its overtones of rapprochement with the Northern liberal bloc of the Republican Party, which since the early 1960's had been locked in conflict with the growing conservative strength of the Sunbelt states as represented by Mr. Reagan and Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, was viewed as the only course for a Republican to take.

"There were never two camps of thought about it among the staff," Mr. Deaver said. "There were some reservations, some holdouts, but basically it was felt that this move was the best way to ensure the nomination and the best way to put the party back together after the convention."

When Job Began

The process to select a Vice-President running mate began about two months ago, according to Reagan insiders, and was a job that fell principally to Mr. Sears and Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada, chairman of the National Citizens for Reagan effort. The names of many prominent Republicans in public and private life were considered, but since the nomination itself was far from assured, there was not much pressure applied for a

tinal decision.

"Then we began to feel all kinds of advantages in making our choice public before the convention," Mr. Sears said. "We knew we'd take some heat, but we had to face the reality that the Eastern wing might walk away from a Reagan nomination, making the nomination worthless."

The Eastern perception that the Californian was too far to the right politically and too narrowly based geographically had to be altered, he said.

"Schweiker has strength and credibility among groups in the North that rightly or wrongly Ronald Reagan does not have much of a following because of these perceptions," Mr. Sears said. "The fact that Schweiker is from Pennsylvania does help us there. I think we've upset some of these perceptions and calculations."

"It also creates a few problems for the President," Mr. Sears said. "He's been saying he would probably be running with Ronald Reagan no matter

how many times our man said he would not accept the job. Ford now is in a position where he must tell everyone who his running mate will be and not hide behind the illusion of Reagan being on his ticket."

Mr. Sears and Senator Laxalt first reached Senator Schweiker nine days ago while he was vacationing in Ocean City, N.J., and requested a confidential meeting in Washington. The meeting took place, as Mr. Schweiker described it yesterday, with a feeling on his part that the others were going to dangle the Vice Presidency as enticement for votes out of the Pennsylvania delegation.

But instead of the usual dickering, he was directly offered a place on the ticket, he said, an offer that "literally stunned and shocked me."

He spent that evening discussing the offer with his wife, and reached Mr. Sears the next day to accept. The weekend meeting with the candidate was then arranged to assuage Mr. Reagan's own doubts about the Pennsylvanian as a running mate.

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