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THE SOUTHERN STRATEGY: AN UPDATE

The GOP mastadons may have a new lease on life. That lease may be one of the most dramatic byproducts of the current dispute over the Panama Canal. Certainly for the three leading Republican conservatives who will be up for reelection in 1974, the Panama Canal controversy is the best thing to happen to their political futures since Richard Nixon left office.

Strom Thurmond, Jesse Helms, and John Tower will be able to mount their elephants and rush to the defense of America's indefensible military asset. Their patriotism will be fervent, their emotion will be spirited, and their logic will be garbled. But it will be good politics. And it may well save the political hides of three men who late last year seemed headed for whatever is done with used Republican leather. (All five southern Republican seats in the Senate will be up in 1978, however, Sen. Howard Baker, Jr. is considered safe and Sen. William Scott is thankfully retiring.)

Outside the South's aging conservative trio, the GOP's hopes for 1978 are far less bright than Kevin Philipps would have predicted in the aftermath of Richard Nixon's 1968 victory. In no state outside of Tennessee is the GOP likely to elect a Republican governor in 1978. And they will lose one in South Carolina. In no state will they be likely to win an additional Senate seat, though spirited campaigns could obviously cost them one or more of the Panama troika. And outside Texas where a string of Democratic retirements presents some Republican opportunities, there are few GOP openings for gains in the House of Representatives: maybe one each in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

The GOP in the South is in sad shape. Its right turn in the 1960s and early 1970s has alienated it

from its potential "new majority" of moderate voters. As Jack Bass and Walter DeVries observe in The Transformation of Southern Politics: Sen. Barry Goldwater's strategy killed the chance for the Republican Party to assume a role of reform in the one-party South, and the GOP increasingly attracted the most reactionary elements of the region to the party." Reflecting on the stupidity of the Nixon Administration political policies, the authors note: "...maturing Republican conservatives in the South have begun to question the validity of the 'southern strategy' in a region that includes 3.5 million registered black voters. They have lost too many elections to Democrats who won because of black votes alienated from Republicans because of that strategy."

There are two truly hopeful and positive developments in the southern GOP. One is the realization that the party must work from the bottom up in states like Arkansas, Georgia and Alabama to develop electable candidates who can draw adherents into the party organization. The big elephant strategy has failed too often, leaving party workers with nothing to show for their money and efforts. The new password to electoral success is quality local candidates. In broadening the party's pool of candidates, the GOP will also broaden its base.

Thankfully, the only-whites-welcome strategy of the Nixon Administration era has also been abandoned. Republican National Chairman Bill Brock has taken the lead in efforts to recruit electable black candidates and attract black voters to white candidates. GOP office seekers like U.S.Reps. Robert Tribble(R-Va.) and Bob Livingston(R-La.) have practiced the Brock doctrine. So is Virginia attorney general candidate Marshall Coleman. The new day is the southern GOP is perhaps best epitomized

by newspaper photo of Sen. Strom Thurmond escorting his six-year-old daughter to her first day of classes at a fully integrated Columbia, S.C., school. Nobody ever said Thurmond couldn't adapt.

The message that the GOP needs more than ideological purity to win elections is a hard one to accept. The idea that the Panama Canal is a GOP-lifesaver is a tempting one, but one that some of the South's more perceptive leaders don't buy. "It's one of those things that's here today and gone tomorrow. You're not going to get people into the Republican Party by talking about the Panama Canal," says one Deep South party official. "You have to talk about people issues."

The GOP's problems in the South run much deeper after all than a ditch across the isthmus of Panama. Jimmy Carter wrecked a good deal of what remained of the Southern GOP from Nixon's Southern Strategy and Watergate. Carter's support in the South has remained fairly solid. As Scripps-Howards' Ted Knap wrote this summer:

"A Republican National Committee official conceded that there is no evidence of Carter support in the South crumbling or eroding. The GOP has not given up below the Mason-Dixon line, but the high hopes born in the 1964 Goldwater campaign and expanded in the 1972 Nixon reelection have flickered and dimmed."

RNC political director Charles Black professes optimism about Carter Country: "Jimmy Carter is a passing phenomenon. The Democrats won't always have a southerner to run for the White House. We have a natural constituency down there in the South, and we're going to capitalize on it sooner or later." And indeed, the GOP has been remarkably successful this year in winning special elections, where the RNC's expertise and aid has been put to good use.

Black's own elevation to the RNC post is a symbol of Republican trouble, however. Black's former organization, the National Conservative Political Action Committee, has been notable for the discord it has sown in northern Virginia GOP circles. Black's former mentor, North Carolina Sen. Jesse Helms, is notable for his expositions on ideological purity and practice of the same. A right wing takeover of the Tarheel GOP has driven moderates from the party. The intolerance of Republicans like Helms is a symptom of the GOP's problems, not its potential.

The Reagan wing of the party seems as hell-bent on the destruction of the party as Brock is hell-bent on its reconstruction. As respected southern political analyst Jack Bass wrote this summer in the Washington Post: "The internal disputes over party policy not only drain energy away, but the recent Republican record of defeat leaves little to attract bright and able young southerners interested in political careers."

Helms may well win reelection next year. His victory will be the ultimate goal of the archconservatives who now control his state's party. But the party's efforts to win other offices will be impoverished. A Helms reelection will get press headlines, but the really good news for the southern GOP will come in other states where more farsighted state leaders have seen the need to recruit quality candidates for local offices. Helms has a holding strategy---for holding onto the canal and holding onto his office. Elsewhere in the South, political retardation is not so prevalent.

ALABAMA Back in 1964, the state GOP elected three congressmen, all of whom have kept tenacious hold of their seats ever since. Their election has constituted the high water mark for Alabama Republicans, who have had to struggle to elect a single legislator. Party Chairman Bill Harris intends to concentrate on legislative and local races next year in an effort to improve the GOP's recent dismal performance in all but the congressional races. It is a task made harder by the necessity for Harris to smooth out the rough edges left by a Ford-Reagan split in party leadership in 1976.

And it is a task made even more difficult by the inclination of many would-be officeholders to take their chances in a crowded Democratic primary rather than make a futile run on the GOP label. One member of the GOP state committee was even elected to the legislature this year as a Democrat. And even a longshot gubernatorial hopeful like former Auburn pigskin star Fob James would rather switch to the Democrats than compete for a dubious designation by the GOP.

Former Cullman County Probate Judge Guy Hunt is seeking the Republican nomination for governor---and even hopes that Ronald Reagan will return

the support Hunt gave him in 1976--- but no one seriously expects that a Republican will replace George Wallace. Gov. Wallace is, of course, running for the seat now held by Sen. John Sparkman, but lack of courtesy in preempting a retirement announcement has angered Sparkman supporters. Still, although Wallace has had his troubles with the legislature and with his wife, he would have to be the odds-on favorite to win the seat. Two Democratic state senators have declared their interest, but no Republicans have emerged to challenge Wallace.

The real attention is on the Democratic gubernatorial primary where a big field is shaping up. It includes Lt. Gov. Jere Beasley (currently hated by Wallace); former Gov. Albert Brewer (previously hated and probably still disliked by Wallace); Attorney General Bill Baxley (hated by a number of good ole boys for sending them to jail); and State Sen. Sid McDonald. Baxley has managed to break up a number of Alabama traditions---like rural speed traps---while avoiding Wallace's anger. Unless voters hold a Penthouse magazine article against him, he may be the state's next governor.

Republicans will be concentrating on enlarging their one-member delegation in the legislature. When the state shifted from multiple to single-member districts in 1974, Republicans expected GOP faces to blossom like magnolias. Watergate proved to be a killing frost and Jimmy Carter proved to have an equally chilling effect. Harris would like to see 20-25 Republicans in the lower house and 3-5 in the State Senate in 1978. It would be a considerable improvement over the two-man delegation earlier in this decade.

The congressional delegation--- Jack Edwards, Bill Dickinson, and John Buchanan---should remain unchanged, unless conservative purists decide to exorcise the relative moderate Buchanan.

ARKANSAS When Winthrop Rockefeller was alive and governor, this state was perhaps the South's best example of a top-down strategy. With the passing of the late governor, the GOP's percentages in statewide races frequently bordered on the pathetic. The GOP came closest to success when Republican Judy Petty nearly upset U.S.Rep. Wilbur Mills in 1974.

The state GOP has now reversed its strategy and along with Alabama, is pro-

bably the model of the bottom-up strategy for the Dixie GOP. Both senatorial and gubernatorial offices will undoubtedly be vacated by incumbents in 1978, but the GOP's energies will be expended at the local and legislative level where the GOP has targeted certain counties for short-term gains. It has sought candidates more noteworthy for their civic-mindedness than for their ideological purity. The GOP already managed to pick up one legislative seat in a special election this year---in addition to the two gained in 1976.

The top of the ticket spots will not be ignored, but the GOP's goals will not be unrealistic. The state's most popular Democratic politicians--- and there are a number---will be vying for those spots. Gov. David Pryor(D) is expected to step down in order to seek Sen. John L. McClellan's seat. McClellan's health has been poor and he is not expected to seek reelection. Pryor will not be his favored candidate, however, since the then-congressman nearly defeated him in a 1972 primary runoff.

McClellan is thought to favor U.S. Ray Thornton(D), a moderate who would have extensive financial backing. Thornton's successors as attorney general, now-U.S.Rep. Jim Guy Tucker(D) and present Attorney General Bill Clinton(D) are also considering a Senate run---as is U.S.Rep. Bill Alexander(D). Clinton ran unsuccessfully against the state's fourth congressman, U.S. Rep. John Paul Hammerschmidt(R), in 1974. Hammerschmidt would have been a serious GOP contender for the spot had he not decided against the race. Instead, the GOP's leading choice is "Bo" Holleman, who ran a disappointing race against Alexander in 1976.

Pryor would probably be given the edge in the Senate primary were it not for his recent quarrels with the Arkansas Education Association and the state AFL-CIO. The liberal vote to which he was heir in the 1972 primary against McClellan will undoubtedly be split in 1978 among several candidates.

There is also a multi-candidate field for the Democratic nomination for governor---headed by Attorney General Clinton and Lieutenant Gov. Joe Purcell(D), a representative of the Democratic old guard. The GOP's candidate is likely to be State Republican Chairman Lynn Lowe, who would

probably resign his post to make the race.

Under Lowe's leadership, the GOP has once again begun to cultivate the black voters that Rockefeller once drew to the Republican standard. There is some hope too that Rockefeller's son, Win Paul, will some day pick up his father's political legacy and become a candidate himself.

FLORIDA In Florida, the Democrats gave a party and everybody came. It's called the gubernatorial game. The big names in the party are virtually all included: Attorney General Robert Shevin, who combines liberal Dade County support with backing from law and order conservatives; Lt. Gov. Jim Williams, a moderate conservative who needs some help from outgoing Gov. Reubin Askew; State Sen. Bob Graham, a Dade County liberal who's gained fame by his work-a-job-a-day campaign; State Treasurer Bill Gunter, whose frequent campaigns have made his name a bit too familiar; Secretary of State Bruce A. Smathers, who has built his political career on his father's name identification; and St. Petersburg businessman Raleigh Greene, Jr.

Geographical and ideological splits make the outcome difficult to predict but Shevin is considered the Democratic primary leader. Graham's unusual campaign---spending a day as a bellhop, he ended up carrying Shevin's bags---make him an unpredictable threat.

The Republicans have a narrower field although a bitter primary might give the party a chance to regain the position that Claude Kirk held for four controversial years in the 1960s. Former General Services Administrator Jack Eckerd(R) challenged Kirk for the GOP nomination when Kirk sought a second term in 1970. He lost the primary but went on to win a Senate primary in 1974. Without the presence of an American Independent party candidate in the general election race, he might well have defeated Sen. Richard Stone (D).

Eckerd's polls now show him a 2-1 leader over U.S.Rep. Louis Frey for next year's gubernatorial nomination. Frey's political reputation suffered some abuse last year over his handling of the Ford primary campaign in the state. He has been campaigning hard

for the GOP nomination, but Eckerd has substantial advantages in money and name recognition as a consequence of his direction of the Eckerd drug store chain. Frey, however, maintains that Eckerd is breaking an earlier promise to back him for the gubernatorial nomination. If the GOP race does not degenerate into name-calling, there is a possibility that Frey might accept the nomination for lieutenant governor, according to St. Petersburg Times political editor Howell Raines. Says Raines: "Already fading is speculation that Eckerd and the GOP might be bold enough to pick the party's only proven statewide winner, Public Service Commissioner Paula F. Hawkins, to run for lieutenant governor. Right now, Republican leaders don't seem to want to win badly enough to break the sex barrier in Florida's gubernatorial politics." (A third potential candidate for the GOP nomination backed out early. Millionaire banker and environmentalist Nat Reed threw his support to Eckerd.)

With potentially strong primary challenges to GOP U.S.Reps. J.Herbert Burke(R-12) and Richard Kelly(R-5) along with the retirement of Frey, there is some potential for reduction in the GOP ranks in Congress. Former Frey law partner Edward Gurney has been mentioned as a possible candidate for the 9th C.D. seat he held primary to his election to the Senate. Now dealing in Winter Park real estate after acquittal in two extortion trials, he has been urged by GOP leaders to return to politics.

Republican ranks in the state legislature have been reduced by defections as well as electoral losses. Although the GOP hopes to regain some of its previous strength in the legislature in 1978, real gains may have to await the elimination of multiple-member districts.

GEORGIA When Jimmy Carter was governor of Georgia, state law prevented him from succeeding himself. For Gov. Carter, it was a good thing because he might well have had a harder time running for reelection than for President. Carter's national popularity tended to resurrect his home-state image. This era of Goober Feeling, however, was the jolt that GOP congressional candidate Newt Gingrich (D) didn't need last year.

Gingrich deserved to win as much as any Republican in 1976. He was a young, articulate candidate who was making his second race against U.S.

Rep. John Flynt, an old, undistinguished beneficiary of the congressional seniority system. In 1974, Gingrich was washed away by Watergate. In 1976, he was caught by Carter. But in 1978 John Flynt may well be turned out of office because of his conduct of the job he never wanted: chairman of the House Committee on Standards of Conduct. History may have finally given Gingrich a favorable turn of the cards.

The election of Gingrich in the 3rd C.D. may well be the highest office to which Georgia Republicans can reasonably aspire in 1978. Sen. Sam Nunn and Gov. George Busbee are considered too entrenched to challenge. There's talk that Bert Lance could win election on a wave of public sympathy, but emotion will eventually be replaced by reason---the sort of reason that gave Lance only 17 percent of the gubernatorial primary vote in 1974.

Lance has also been talked about as a possible candidate against U.S. Rep. Larry McDonald, the laetrile-lobbying member of the conservative shadow cabinet. McDonald has served two terms because the Republican candidate in 1974 and 1976 presented little ideological alternative for moderate Democrats. A more moderate conservative like State Rep. Ken Nix might do McDonald in if the Democrats don't do it first in their primary.

Serious GOP challenges are probable in several other districts, but their chances of success are problematical. The GOP stands a much better shot at dramatically improving its representa-

tion in the state legislature. This has been the focus of new GOP State Chairman Rodney Cook(R), who has emphasized the recruitment of quality rather than quantity candidates. Combined with the party's new outreach to black voters, the GOP has begun the groundwork for some happy returns come November 1978.

The type of candidate the GOP must nominate and elect is typified by State Rep. John Savage, the former candidate for lieutenant governor who was elected this year to fill the spot vacated by now-Associate Attorney General Michael Egan. Savage will not be making any statewide moves in 1978, but he would be a prime candidate in 1980 against Sen. Herman Talmadge(D), the venerable Georgia politician whose divorce---and accompanying allegations of heavy drinking---may have cracked the foundations of his rural support.

LOUISIANA This may be the only state in the South where the Republican Party can truly be said to have been a growth industry in recent years. U.S.Rep. David Treen(R-1st) became the first Republican to represent the state in this century when he was elected in 1972. In the 1st C.D. W.Henson Moore became the second when he won a special election in the 6th C.D. in 1975. And Robert Livingston became the third when he won another special election in the 1st C.D. in 1977.

It is an impressive record, but it must be remembered that each won under special circumstances. Treen had waged an effective campaign for governor earlier in 1972 and had run for Congress three times in the 19-60s. Furthermore, he was seeking an open seat---as was Moore in 1974 when incumbent archconservative John Rarick(D) was defeated in his party's primary. In Moore's case, a disputed general election led to a court-ordered special election in which Rarick's old supporters helped defeat a liberal Democrat. In Livingston's case, he also was the beneficiary of a special election after running a close race against now-jailed Richard A. Tonry(D) last November.

Livingston's victory is a tribute to hard work by both the candidate and the Republican National Committee, but it is also a function of some other special circumstances. Had the election been held two or more weeks earlier,



Democrat Ron Faucheux would have been the victor. Instead, Faucheux succeeded in alienating the core of his support---black and labor voters---by voting against a new corporate tax which the state legislature had proposed to finance an increase in teacher salaries. The AFL-CIO disendorsed the state representative and black leaders held discussions with Livingston.

The GOP candidate was ready for his new converts. His media portrayed him as a former welder from a poverty background who had gained solid middle class stability with wife and kids. Faucheux, by contrast, was portrayed as an immaculately groomed bachelor with rather plastic movie star good looks that betrayed few of the ravages of life. The difference in the two men's ages was accentuated by the fact that Faucheux still lived at home.

Livingston aggressively courted the black as well as the blue collar vote. He won over one fifth of the black vote, an incredible showing for a Louisiana Republican. In this instance, he ironically benefitted from Faucheux's support from the district's biggest segregationist organization in Orleans Parish.

Livingston's superior media and superior financing were crucial to his victory. Both John Connally and George Bush, Jr. headlined fundraisers during the campaign. And several thousand Democrats switched to the GOP before the August primary. One Democratic legislator even made the cross-party hop.

The GOP may have one more district in which they can capitalize on special circumstances to elect a Republican. Otto Passman's 30-year hold on the rural 5th C.D. ended in 1976. U.S.Rep. Jerry Huckaby barely kept it in the Democratic column, and the GOP will make a major effort to cut short his career in 1978.

Otherwise, the GOP will concentrate on holding what it's got---which may be particularly difficult in the case of Livingston's 1st C.D.---and set its sights on the 1979 gubernatorial race when controversial Gov. Edwin Edwards (D) promises to retire. Lt. Gov. James E. Fitzmorris, Jr., will be waiting to step up to the governorship, but there has even been speculation that Sens. Russell Long and Bennett

Johnston might be interested. Johnston nearly beat Edwards in the 1971 Democratic primary and Long, of course, has the Kingfish tradition of his father to emulate. Less politically, fanciful, perhaps, is the suggestion that U.S.Rep. Gillis Long(D-8) might want to continue the Long gubernatorial tradition.

MISSISSIPPI In recent years, Mississippi has epitomized the rise in southern influence within the GOP. Clarke Reed was the avenging angel of southern conservatives who warned the GOP of the evils of progressive policies. Under Reed's leadership, the GOP elected two Republican congressman and came close to electing Gil Carmichael to both the Senate and the State House. The party was a model of what could potentially be achieved by a unified party in a state where the Democrats were chronically split.

The 1976 presidential race turned the political tables in Mississippi. The GOP emerged from Kansas City badly split and the Democrats have repaired their most grievous differences. Moreover, the opportunity for one of the state's three top Republicans to succeed Sen. James Eastland (D) in 1978 may never materialize. Eastland shows no signs of relinquishing the power he has accumulated in his 36 years in Congress. If Eastland is reelected in 1978 and serves out his term, he will establish a Senate record for longevity---probably the most positive accomplishment to which he can aspire.

Had Eastland retired in 1978, a long line of Democratic hopefuls might have formed to succeed him: Gov. Cliff Finch, U.S.Reps. G.V."Sonny" Montgomery and David Bowen, and former Gov. Bill Waller. Finch is unpopular with many Democratic officials, but he is unlikely to test his grassroots strength by opposing Eastland. Waller may be more tempted, but he has a weaker base. Only former Lt. Gov. Charles Sullivan is considered a likely Democratic opponent. As columnist Paul Pittman wrote recently:

What it boils down to is that no potential candidate who perceives himself as having a future in public affairs is willing to take the calculated risk of opposing the state's senior senator in the Democratic primary...

What Eastland strategists fear most is that one credible candidate in the race could trigger a deluge of relative

unknowns who might make the campaign for the exercise, and in the process force a bruising runoff where the odds would be uncertain.

Gil Carmichael has not announced whether he will seek the Senate again or wait for the gubernatorial mansion to post a vacancy in 1979. Should Eastland seek reelection, it is unlikely that U.S.Reps. Thad Cochran and Trent Lott will abandon their safe seats to tilt at the Senate's president pro tempore. All three will have to weigh the odds with the deep splits within the state GOP in mind.

Wounds from the bitter battle between Reagan and Ford supporters within the state delegation were reopened recently by the publication of Jules Witcover's The Pursuit of the Presidency. Publication of some of the book's conclusions in the Jackson Sunday newspaper brought an outraged response from W.D. "Billy" Mounger, the state Reagan leader and premier money raiser. Mounger was a prime backer of Carmichael in previous elective outings, but Carmichael alienated Mounger last year through his fervent support of Gerald Ford. Mounger has said that he "would not be doing much for Mr. Carmichael in the future."

Mounger reserves his harshest words however, for former chairman Reed whom, he says, was guilty of "quadriplecity" in his switch from Ronald Reagan to Ford. Says Mounger, "...no one contends that we would have lost the delegation without the blatantly crass sellout techniques of Reed et al for their own vain-glorious, egocentric benefits." State Chairman Charles Pickering is struggling to heal these festering wounds with some success. It is, however, no easy task.

NORTH CAROLINA It is hard to understand what Sen. Jesse Helms(R) has against Panama President Omar Torrijos. Helms may owe his reelection to Torrijos. Otherwise rational voters are rallying to the Helms banner as a result of his outspoken opposition to the Panama Canal Treaty. Without that treaty, Helms would be highly vulnerable. It allows the former news broadcaster to make political inroads outside his East North Carolina stronghold.

Democrats now feel that their best chance of defeating Helms is an appeal to party loyalty and a campaign to minimize ticket splitting. Helms projects a nonpolitical image in the state de-

spite his deep involvement in right wing politics. It is that image that Democrats hope to destroy.

The leading Democratic contender to do just that is Luther Hodges, Jr., son of the former governor and until he retired to campaign, chairman of the North Carolina National Bank. He became the leading "name" candidate when Superior Court Judge Sam J. Ervin III, son of Senator Sam, decided against making the race. Ervin's former Watergate counsel, now Attorney General Rufus Edmisten, has yet to make up his political mind. Though he has about as many principles as smarts, Edmisten could attract considerable organization support for a Senate race. State Senators McNeill Smith and Lawrence Davis are not expected to have top spots in the primary, but State Insurance Commissioner John R. Ingrams could use his maverick image to build electoral strength.

Although the next gubernatorial election is not until 1980, there are preliminary maneuvers as Gov. James Hunt(D) attempts to win approval for a proposal that he be allowed to succeed himself. As in Alabama the governor and lieutenant governor are not on particularly good terms. That phenomenon is not particularly unusual in the South where lieutenant governors see themselves as future governors and present governors see lieutenant governors as obstacles to their legislative goals. Lt. Gov. James Green(D) understandably considers Hunt's succession proposal to be unacceptably greedy. So do GOP leaders, who are seeking to block the proposal.

It's not that the GOP has any obvious candidates for governor in 1980. The Helmification of the GOP has left room for few interests that compete with the reelection of Jesse. "Everything's geared to Jesse's basket," says one disenchanted Republican. Even U.S. Rep. James Martin(R-9th) could be sucked down by the Helms organization. The new GOP leadership in Charlotte is particularly narrow-minded. It has already pushed State Sen. Carolyn Mathis into the Democratic Party by threatening her elimination. Both moderates and women are finding the Tarheel GOP to be increasingly intolerable. After losing 40 state legislators in 1974, the GOP can ill afford such exclusionary tactics. As the Durham Morning Herald's Bill Gilkeson observes, "Republican have so little strength in the legislature this session that they don't constitute a real opposition party. The main resistance to Hunt seems to come from Green and less obviously, from House

Speaker Carl Stewart." It is not obvious that Helms cares. He has to worry about General Torriros.

SOUTH CAROLINA The state GOP already had its share of troubles when South Carolina Gov. James B. Edwards (R) took a summer trip to South Africa. His criticism of American policy toward Africa and his defense of the South African government made fellow Republicans cringe. "The whole trip was poor judgment and the remarks just added to it," concluded former state chairman and Nixon aide Harry Dent. "...the governor's remarks are not going to enhance our position among blacks," added GOP National Committeeman Ray Harris.

Edwards plans to resume the practice of dentistry, but Republicans wish he'd kept his own mouth shut. The South Carolina GOP had been working to get black voters into the GOP column and had been holding meetings toward to capture a portion of South Carolina's 26 percent black vote. GOP State Chairman Dan Ross has argued that "blacks in South Carolina can develop leverage by not being in the Democratic bag." Edwards' comment that "black influence in American politics" distorted the South African government's positions in the United States didn't help.

The Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress has been pushing Edwards to challenge U.S.Rep. Mendel J. Davis in a district that is over one third black. There had been earlier suggestions that Sen. Strom Thurmond (R) ought to retire in favor of an Edwards' candidacy in 1978. Oddly enough, Edwards' fumbling came after a year in which he was comparatively successful in his chief executive role. In his relations with the overwhelmingly Democratic legislature, noted the Charleston News and Courier's Hugh Gibson, "He did prevail where most of the big issues were concerned, and where he lost he appeared to retain a considerable amount of respect and liking among the legislators. But where Edwards really scored this year was with the public, for whom he went to bat with his vetoes of the cigarette and gasoline tax increases." Edwards, unfortunately has a tendency to disappear abroad for long periods. He did so late last year in a trip to Nationalist China and Israel that Gibson described as illustrative of Edwards' "lemming-like march to self-destruction." Having recovered the prestige he lost 1976, Edwards squandered it again.

Edwards was elected in 1974 as a result of independent voters' reactions to machinations in the Democratic party. The winner of the Democratic gubernatorial was Charles "Pug" Ravenel, but a Democratic court challenge of Ravenel's residency credentials kicked him off the ballot. Former U.S.Rep. William Jennings Bryan Dorn (D) was then upset by Edwards. Actually, the GOP's nominee for lieutenant governor, Carroll Campbell, was given a better shot at election. Campbell, who was popular in urban areas, disassociated himself from Edwards in search of ticket splitters. The strategy backfired when Edwards won and Campbell didn't.

Campbell is now intent on running for the 4th C.D. spot in Congress. Incumbent U.S.Rep. James Mann (D) is considered a prime candidate for retirement after the embarrassment of disclosures regarding use of his staff and prestige to further his financial interest in a bicentennial coin enterprise. State Rep. Nick Theodore (D) would also like to succeed Mann.

Meanwhile, the GOP is without a truly viable gubernatorial candidate. Edwards' victory in 1974 is widely considered a fluke, the repetition of which would require a genuine miracle. Indeed GOP candidates for any constitutional office are in short supply. The party realizes that its future lies nearer the grassroots. The Democrats are unlikely to repeat the fratricidal conduct that permitted Edwards' victory. Still, there will be a spirited three-way race for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. Former State Sen. Richard Riley, the man Campbell succeeded in 1976 in the legislature, is the Democratic heir to Ravenel's liberal supporters. Lt. Gov. W. Brantley Harvey, Jr., is the heir to old line Democratic support. And the wild card is State Sen. Tom Turnipseed, a former archconservative Republican turned reform populist Democrat. Riley's poor campaign start and President Carter's snub of Harvey earlier this year may open some room for Turnipseed, who has a talent for generating front-page ink. One Republican was recently quoted as calling Turnipseed "crazy as a damn bedbug, but crazy in a smart way."

This year, Ravenel has announced his intention to contest Sen. Strom Thurmond. A poll taken by Campbell indicated a Thurmond-Ravenel contest would be a hot one. Thurmond is expected to wage an independent campaign and his popularity will likely have little impact on the guber-

natorial race. Only once, in 1970, did Thurmond put his prestige on the line behind the GOP gubernatorial candidate, Albert Watson. He lost. Ravenel has solicited and been promised presidential support in this contest. A straw poll by a Columbia newspaper showed Thurmond ahead of Ravenel by a 50-32 percent margin. Ravenel will have to rely on urban and black support as well as his image as a "new politics politician. And he will, in addition, have to overcome the splits in the Democratic party that Thurmond will be eager to exacerbate.

TENNESSEE While the national media has focused on Sen. Howard Baker's relationship to the Panama Canal, the Tennessee press has been headlining Gov. Ray Blanton's relationship to a convicted murderer. The murderer in question became the center of controversy when it was revealed that he was both the son of a Blanton patronage aide and the beneficiary of a state work-release program whereby he was given a job as a state photographer after serving less than two months of his 20-40 year prison term. Blanton has a habit of turning mud into quick sand and he quickly availed himself of the opportunity in this case. Labeling the young murderer "an outstanding, a fine young man," Blanton promised to fully pardon him before leaving office.

The media quickly dispelled any notion that the state's photographer was the emotional victim of marital jealousy. The murderer sat down and had breakfast and a drink with his former wife and best friend before shooting them 18 times---an act that required him to reload his derringer eight times. As the appellate judge concluded, "... the evidence supports, at the very least, a conviction for second-degree murder in each of these homicides." Despite the overwhelming evidence that the murders had been premeditated, Blanton has proclaimed his belief in the efficacy of Tennessee's penal rehabilitation process: "Don't you realize that 30 days can be time enough for rehabilitation?"

Blanton's ability to make the wrong grand gesture would make Richard Nixon blush with embarrassment. His pardon announcement was made on a special TV interview in which he also called U.S. Rep. Robin Beard a "joke," suggested his critics were "stupid and you haven't done your homework," and that the license of the TV station on which he was appearing should be

revoked. In lines that Nixon's chief aides probably would have wished to hear, Blanton said: "I am the chief executive and I am invested with the power of pardon and parole, and I intend to use that power." Blanton later extended his assault on the press when he told a hometown press conference: "What have I done wrong except to question your integrity, and believe me, it needs questioning."

In his brief term as governor, Blanton has quarreled with just about everybody worth quarrelling with. As the Memphis Commercial Appeal's William Bennett observed recently, "The Blanton administration and some of its members and friends have been accused of so much political hanky-pany and wrongdoing since 1975 that it takes an awful lot to generate strong public outrage these days." But the pardon case has so succeeded--- it led the Commercial Appeal to editorially label Blanton "Our Hillbilly Nixon." It may well be that Blanton, not Howard Baker, is the state GOP's biggest asset.

Tennessee Republicans would not be particularly disturbed if the state constitution were changed to allow Blanton to seek a second term. He would, however, create problems for GOP record-keepers since he would undoubtedly have to be listed as campaign donation in lieu of services rendered. As usual, there are a long list of Tennessee Democrats who want Blanton's job: House Speaker Ned McWherter, State Rep. James Lanier, State Rep. Roger Murray, Nashville Mayor Richard Fulton, Oak Ridge banker Jake Butcher, State Sen. Anna Clement O'Brien, Public Service Commissioner Robert Clement, and Franklin Haney.

The long list alone might be enough to warm GOP hearts had not Sen. James Sasser(D) and Blanton himself emerged from such crowded primaries to defeat strong GOP candidates in 1974 and 1976. Tennessee Democrats have learned how to regroup and repel Republican challenges. The GOP undoubtedly will have a strong ticket in 1978, however. Lamar Alexander, a former aide to Gov. Winfield Dunn and Sen. Baker and 1974 GOP gubernatorial candidate, has long been considered the party's most logical candidate. However, the discussion of a constitutional extension of the governor's permissible term in office has led Winfield to express renewed interest in the office. Though Dunn would be a strong candidate in the general election, he would have problems in the GOP primary where considerable animosity will be exhib-

ited by East Tennessee Republicans who resented Dunn's refusal to open a medical school at East Tennessee State University.

Even more disturbing than a clash between the moderates Alexander and Dunn is the possibility that State Rep. Harold Sterling might emerge as the winner of a three-way primary. Typical of the line of reasoning from the 1976 state Reagan chairman is the following gem: "Lamar's a Vanderbilt graduate. I'm a Memphis State graduate. That immediately puts us in a different social strata. I think I'd categorize him as the country club set. Even though I drive a Cadillac, and have a successful business, probably my appeal is going to be middle class. I come from the middle class. It hasn't been too many years that I definitely was middle class."

Meanwhile, Sen. Baker seems immune from a serious reelection challenge though Sen. Sasser insists his colleague is beatable. He will help the party if he can help shore up its increasingly weak bastion in East Tennessee. U.S. Rep. James H. Quillen(R-1) received 58 percent of the vote in 1976 and may face a stiffer contest next year from State Sen. Carl Moore. It may be the only district where a changeover is possible. State GOP Chairman Tom Beasley, however, will be concentrating on state legislative races, hoping to reverse the GOP's steady decline in that area. For the Democrats, their future may be summed up in the letters "ABBB:" Anybody But Blanton and Baker.

TEXAS John Tower(R) appears to have strengthened his hold on the Republican Senate nomination, but U.S. Rep. Robert Krueger(D-21) appears to have been equally successful in his efforts to lock up the Democratic Senate nomination. The race between the two men is shaping up as a battle of gas deregulation proponents---in other words, who can do more for the gas lobby. Krueger has led the fight for natural gas deregulation in the House and opinions differ on whether smart oil money is shifting to the former Duke University dean.

The recently remarried incumbent seems to have sewn up a good deal of establishment money at a June fundraiser although archconservative Hank Grover was still making noises this spring about opposing Tower, saying, "My chances of beating Tower are the strongest because everybody's mad at

Tower...There's been no growth in the party since he was first elected." Grover still believes he could have beaten Gov. Dolph Briscoe in 1972 had he received more Tower support. On the Democratic side, the only opposition to Krueger to surface so far consists of Texas Insurance Board Chairman Joe Christie; Barefoot Sanders, Tower's 1972 opponent; and former Sen. Ralph Yarborough. Yarborough's trouble is that name confusion helped elect Don Yarbrough to the state Supreme Court last year. Yarbrough has since been indicted for perjury and forgery. The name similarity may hurt the 74-year-old liberal.

The situation in the gubernatorial race is more complicated. Briscoe appears to be the odds-on favorite to win a third term although he probably will have to defeat Attorney General John Hill(D) in a primary. Though Briscoe's ability to hold the state budget in check has won him a large measure of voter approval, there is some sentiment against his decision to seek a third term. In any event, the GOP has had trouble attracting a viable candidate. Both George Bush and Anne Armstrong appear happy in other pursuits.

State GOP Chairman Ray Hutchinson announced in September that he would resign his post to seek the gubernatorial nomination. Twice named the outstanding legislator in the state by the Texas Monthly, Hutchison defeated Reagan state chairman Ray Barnhart for the party leadership in 1976, but he has since grown bored and is looking for a new challenge. A man equally at home with good ole boy legislators from East Texas or urbane Houstonians, Hutchison has accomplished the formidable task of filling nearly all the vacant GOP county and precinct chairmanships in Texas' far-flung counties. With a rare talent for diplomacy, Hutchison has been known to work well persons of diametrically opposite points of view.

Hutchison will undoubtedly benefit from a tough primary campaign between Briscoe and Hill. The Democratic incumbent is a dull and colorless figure who surpasses in that regard his dull and colorless predecessor, Gov. Preston Smith(D), a feat many would have thought impossible before the accession of Briscoe. A rancher with vast acreage in the area west of San Antonio, Briscoe has been criticized for his failure to communicate with the press and his long absences from Austin spent at his Uvalde ranch.

Hill, who ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1968, stresses Briscoe's lack of leadership, which he asserts, leaves the state vulnerable to more federal intrusion. Many observers believe that Texans don't want active leadership and thus are not likely to be any happier with activist state government than with activist federal policies. But Hill's argument may help capture liberal and moderate voters who want activist government at both levels. Hill's most potent weapon, however, may be the public distrust of extended gubernatorial power. If reelected, Briscoe will have the opportunity to serve longer as governor than anyone in Texas history.

Hutchison's ticket will be enhanced by the candidacy of former national Ford campaign director James Baker for state attorney general. He will face the winner of a Democratic primary between Secretary of State Mark White and former House Speaker Price Daniel, Jr. (the son of a former speaker-attorney general-senator-governor who is now an associate justice of the Texas Supreme Court).

The GOP's fate in 1978 may in part reflect the state's reaction to President Carter, under whom the state has not fared well. Since his inauguration, Carter has broken his promise to back gas deregulation, vetoed the sale of 100 jet planes to Pakistan (resulting in the loss of 6,000 Texas jobs), broken a campaign pledge of \$3-per-bushel wheat support payments, and with his support of anti-boycott legislation, threatened Texas-booming trade with Arab nations. His failure to appoint Barbara Jordan as attorney general and his appointment of fewer Hispanics than were made by Presidents Ford and Nixon have weakened Democratic influence among minority groups. Texas voter groups are generally unhappy with Bourbon Democratic rule.

Texas politics is a complicated business and Jimmy Carter has made it more so. Both Briscoe and Krueger have been embarrassed by Carter's opposition to gas deregulation. Carter's secretary, Susan Clough, has not been embarrassed by her boss's stand, however, and flew to Texas to help friend Krueger announce his candidacy in early July. On the other side of the political fence, National Transportation Safety Board member Kay Bailey has expressed an interest in running for office, possibly against State Treasurer Jesse James. However, she dates GOP Chairman Hutchinson and a dual candidacy may tempt public disfavor.

Republicans now hold only two of the state's 24 congressional seats but a large projected turnover in House seats may boost the GOP's possible pickups. In addition to Krueger's seat, there will be vacancies in the seats now held by U.S.Reps. George Mahon(D), Bob Poage(D), and Omar Burleson(D). U.S. Rep. Olin Teague's retirement is also expected.

The GOP expects primary races for the nomination to succeed Mahon between George Bush, Jr.; State Rep. Tom Cradick and former Odessa Mayor Jim Reese with Reese given the edge. To succeed Krueger, a primary race is expected between Doug Harlan the 1972-74 Republican nominee, and Tommy Loeffler, a former Ford legislative lobbyist and Tower staff member. No early favorite has been identified and the field may not yet be filled. The GOP nominee for Poage's seat will be Jack Burgess, who ran a surprisingly strong race in 1976. Party pros considered Burgess' effort one of the best organized since former U.S.Rep. Alan Steelman's 1972 campaign in Dallas. There is no recognized GOP candidate for Burleson's and Teague's seats although Republicans are optimistic.

A hard race is expected by former U.S.Rep. Ron Paul against his successful challenger in 1976, Bob Gammage(D). In the 24th C.D., which includes much of the area between Dallas and Fort Worth known as the Metroplex, Republican Leo Berman will challenge Dale Milford(D), who is remarkably more conservative than his constituency. And strong races may also be run against U.S.Rep. Richard White, a lackluster El Paso congressman, and U.S.Rep. John Young, limelight of a sex scandal in 1976 and possible Koreagate casualty in 1978.

VIRGINIA Former Lt. Gov. Henry Howell(D) has managed to narrow the gap separating him from present Lt. Gov. John Dalton(R). He has accomplished that feat through tough campaign statements that have been so scurrilous that they've boiled away Howell's lead over his Republican opponent.

Howell began his rough stuff in his primary campaign against former Attorney General Andrew Miller(D). Apparently convinced that nastiness wins votes, Howell's lowest blow came perhaps when he said of a Dalton brochure, "This statement will equal what

Goebbels did, in my opinion, who was a master propagandist during the days of Hitler." Miller once noted that "attacks on the motives and integrity of others for reasons of political expedience have been a foundation of Mr. Howell's career." As Henry has gotten more vitriolic, press reaction to his third run for governor has gotten more critical. Dalton himself was led to withdraw from all joint campaign appearances with Howell.

The withdrawal may turn out to be a mistake, however, since joint appearances could highlight the contrast between Dalton's restraint and Howell's unseemly and un-Virginian rancor. Running his own campaign may turn out to be Howell's biggest mistake---with or without the appearance of good ole buddy Jimmy Carter. The President may have seemed on shaky ground in his joint appearances when he attacked Dalton's failure to reveal his personal finances...particularly when Bert Lance had hardly left town.

The Democrats have fielded a "rainbow ticket" this year consisting of the liberal Howell, the moderate Charles Robb for lieutenant governor, and the conservative Edward E. Lane for attorney general. Robb is facing conservative A. Joseph Canada (R), who has sought to base his campaign on opposition to the Panama Canal treaty. Though the two men have exhibited few substantive differences on issues, Robb is considered a shoo-in. Not so Lane whose conservatism has cost him the support of most of the state's black groups and almost denied him the AFL-CIO's backing.

State Sen. J. Marshall Coleman, the GOP candidate, has made good use of Lane's record of unyielding support for "massive resistance" to school integration. Coleman's pursuit of the black vote has met with success

among black organizations and suggested that Coleman is the most likely Republican to win the November election. Many liberal Howell supporters unable to stomach Lane's record will undoubtedly switch to Coleman.

If Coleman does indeed become the lone statewide GOP winner, it will send some shock waves through the ranks of the ultraconservatives who have wrested control of the statewide GOP organization in recent years. Former State GOP Chairman Richard Obenshain has already been tagged as this group's heir to the retiring and discredited Sen. William Scott. The GOP's decision to select next year's candidate in a convention strengthens Obenshain and company.

However, Obenshain will not get the GOP nomination by default if Elizabeth Taylor and husband have their way. Former Navy Secretary John Warner is still only an outside shot at the nomination, however. Former Gov. Linwood Holton (R), U.S. Rep. Caldwell Butler, and U.S. Rep. G. William Whitehurst are also possible Senate entries, all taking a piece of the moderate and moderate-conservative vote in the party.

Though the party's prospects could be upbeat if Dalton and Coleman and both win, there will be a strong downbeat side if they lose and the party's erosion in the legislature continues---as now seems likely. Factionalism---particularly the rabid ideological exclusionism practiced in northern Virginia---continues to weaken the GOP. Further erosion of the party's strength could occur next year if Obenshain faces former Attorney General Miller in the Senate race. Although Miller's path to his party's primary is littered with live and aspiring Democrats, such a November matchup seems likely. ■

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