P.S. to the NEWS
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REPUBLICAN PARTY PLATFORM

There has been a persistent effort in some quarters to propagate the myth that the Republican Party Platform adopted by the Convention in Detroit is somehow the most "conservative" ever. Analysis shows that the 1980 Platform is much the same mainstream Republicanism as those of the last three decades. It is the country, not the Republican Party, which has moved to the right.

Republican Party Platforms are long, verbose documents which are hammered out every four years through hours and days of work by the National Convention Resolutions Committee consisting of a man and a woman from every state. The resulting handiwork of such a large group of able, articulate activists is a document which, while it may never win any prizes for literary style, nevertheless is a faithful synthesis of the views of the Republican Party members in the 50 states.

It seems to matter little whether the writing is directed by Texas Senator John Tower as in 1980, Iowa Governor Robert Ray as in 1976, Arizona Congressman John Rhodes as in 1972, Illinois Senator Everett Dirksen as in 1968, Wisconsin Congressman Melvin Laird as in 1964, Illinois Senator Charles Percy as in 1960, Connecticut Senator Prescott Bush as in 1956, or New York attorney John Foster Dulles as in 1952.

Take, for example, the most important question of our time: what U.S. national strategy should cope with the threat to our survival from the Russian military might? "Superiority" is the key word which separates those who want peace through military strength from those who favor the McNamara-Kissinger-Brown-SALT I and II detente-accomodation approach.

The 1980 Platform pledges a strategy "to achieve overall military and technological superiority over the Soviet Union; [and] to accept no arms control agreement ... which locks the United States into a position of military inferiority." Now let's compare that with Republican Platforms of previous Conventions.

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The 1976 Platform pledged "a superior national defense ... second to none." The 1968 Platform called for "a comprehensive program to restore the pre-eminence of U.S. military strength." The 1964 Republican Platform said: "We will maintain a superior, not merely equal, military capability as long as the Communist drive for world domination continues."

The 1960 Republican Platform promised "to maintain an armed power exceeded by no other." The 1956 Republican Platform boasted that "we have the strongest striking force in the world."

Looking at the broader area of foreign policy, the 1968 Platform stated: "Improved relations with Communist nations can come only when they cease to endanger other states by force or threat." The 1964 Platform read: "Republican foreign policy starts with the assumption that Communism is the enemy of this nation."

The 1960 Platform said: "We advocate an immovable resistance against every Communist aggression." The 1952 Platform stated: "We never compromised with Communism and we have fought to expose it and to eliminate it in government and American life."

The 1976 Republican National Convention Delegates, by floor action, added to the Platform a foreign policy section which repudiated the central elements of the Kissinger foreign policy, namely, detente, the arms control agreements with the Soviets, the deliberate snub of Solzhenitsyn, and the betrayal of the Captive Nations at Helsinki.

The recitation of the 1980 Platform on the Tuesday evening in Detroit was long and tedious. Yet it was encouraging to note that the following sentence from the section on defense drew spontaneous, enthusiastic applause: "We reject the mutual-assured-destruction (MAD) strategy of the Carter Administration which limits the President during crises to a Hobson's choice between mass mutual suicide and surrender."

An audience which would spontaneously applaud that sentence is obviously well informed about the shortcomings of our present defense posture. The Delegates had a serious sense of purpose and they adopted a Platform consistent with those of the past three decades in supporting clearcut military superiority and an anti-Communist foreign policy. Maybe this time the voters are willing to listen.

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