P.S. to the NEWS

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REPUBLICAN CANNIBALISTIC TACTICS

The field of contenders for the Republican Presidential nomination is already more crowded than it has been in recent memory, but there is no limit on entrants. Another non-candidate, Gerald Ford, is making noises as if he would like to join the race, ~~too~~. also,

There are many reasons a man might have for running for President: ambition for power, prestige, or money, or to do good and solve the country's problems. It's pretty clear, however, that former President Ford's motive for edging toward candidacy is to stop Ronald Reagan, now the front runner.

That's a strange motive for a Republican candidate! One could see how a Republican might have an overpowering desire to save America from Carter or Kennedy, or even from Mondale or Brown. But, on the surface, it is hard to see why a Republican, because of an overpowering desire to save America from Reagan, would sacrifice his pleasurable life divided between playing Senior Statesman (with all its prestige and protocol) and playing golf.

Yet Gerald Ford spoke recently at a fund-raiser in Reagan country (Los Angeles) and made what the press described as "a thinly veiled attack on Reagan." That brought some hissing from the audience. Ford delivered the stern caveat that "the Republican Party must be in the mainstream, not in the ideological fringes. It must seek unity of purpose and unity of action."

One would think that the mistakes of the Carter Administration would provide ample material for an endless stream of speakers at Republican gatherings. But therein lies a tale about the peculiar motivation of a small group of powerful persons, based largely in New York, who have always sought to control the Republican Party, no matter what the cost.

The very word "mainstream" evokes echoes of Nelson Rockeller's divisive campaign

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for the presidency in 1964. "Mainstream" was his main slogan; he tried to place himself in the middle of the stream and leave Barry Goldwater high and dry on the right bank.

Rockefeller failed to sell that line to the delegates to the Republican National Convention in San Francisco in 1964, ~~but~~ but he carried his sour-grapesism through to the November election and helped to elect the Democrat, Lyndon Johnson. The attitude of the Rockefeller crowd was exactly like that of the old time Philadelphia political boss who, when told his candidate could not win and would wreck the party, replied, "Yes, but we will own the wreckage."

Nelson Rockefeller never was in the mainstream of the Republican Party, and no Republican National Convention ever came close to nominating him for President or Vice President. In order to achieve his lifetime ambition one way or the other, Rockefeller supported the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which, beginning in 1967, set up the procedure whereby the President can appoint anyone of his choice to fill a vacancy in the office of Vice President.

When President Gerald Ford exercised that great power granted by the 25th Amendment, he chose Nelson Rockefeller, to the consternation and embarrassment of most Republicans who had repeatedly rejected Rockefeller for President and Vice President. Ford thus proved he is part of the group which has repeatedly demonstrated that it would rather divide the Republican Party and elect a Democratic President, than allow a Republican President to be elected whom that faction did not control.

Before making his recent Los Angeles speech, Ford told reporters that he is under "growing pressure" to "take another look" at the 1980 election, and he called his becoming a candidate a "possibility." Columnists are already saying that the Ford campaign staff will include the Washington consulting firm of Bailey, Deardourff & Associates, plus Stuart Spencer, a California consultant.

Republicans should welcome any candidate who presents his platform and his personality to the voters and is willing to abide by their choice. But when a candidate enters the race just to be a spoiler, he should be labelled as such.

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