



Nuclear power: Fifth Horseman

By EDWARD P. MORGAN

It is fashionable but futile to argue that we never should have split the atom. The pressures of World War II forced the genie out of the bottle and now we have not only fission which gave us the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki but we have fusion which has enabled five powers plus India to make hydrogen bombs and the club is getting less exclusive all the time.

On top of this we have a proliferation of nuclear reactors for the ostensible purpose of generating electric energy but with such devastatingly attractive by-products as radioactive waste, which nobody so far has found a way to dispose of safely, and surpluses of plutonium, the vital ingredient for making the bomb and thus making it at least potentially available not only to some tyrannical power but to a terrorist as well.

There is no use blaming ourselves for uncorking the bottle. It was thought — mistakenly as it turned out — that Hitler was far ahead in researching the bomb and nobody doubted that if he got it first he would use it widely. So he would have won World War II while wounding the planet, perhaps fatally, at the same time.

The problem history and science now pose is how to control what, not God, but we have wrought. Conferences are proliferating trying to re-think the problem through. The June referendum in California may be repeated in at least half a dozen other states on the issue of limiting nuclear power.

One useful study has recently been released by that useful research outfit in Washington, Worldwatch Institute. Called "Nuclear Power: The Fifth Horseman", it was written by Denis Hayes, now an institute senior fellow, an environmentalist and former director of the Illinois State Energy Office. Industrial powers, he says, are already hesitating to expand nuclear sources of energy because they can get stuck with an uncompromising and unending commitment to a power source that "cannot brook natural disasters or serious mechanical failures, human mistakes or willful malevolence. It demands an unprecedented vigilance of our social institutions, and demands it for a quarter million years" — meaning the span radioactivity would still be dangerous.

International agreements are in ill repute but if the superpowers would set the pace with arms reduction and better safeguards on nuclear energy use, then the world may have time to pursue substitutes for the atom, whose boon threatens to become a cataclysmic boom.

Morgan is a correspondent for In the Public Interest, a press service of the Fund for Peace.

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Tim Downs

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Ford needs Reagan supporters' help

KANSAS CITY — Lydia Miller had just heard her candidate, Ronald Reagan, talk to the Missouri delegation at last week's Republican National Convention. It was the morning of the presidential balloting. And it was all over, as both she and Reagan knew.

And now the middle-aged career woman, a supervisor of educational relations at Southwestern Bell, was reminiscing about the golden moment, two months earlier, when she and her fellow-conservatives had upset the top leadership of the Missouri GOP and won 18 of the 19 at-large delegates for Reagan at the state convention in Springfield.

There had been a breakfast of the Reagan supporters that morning, she recalled, and it concluded with a benediction from their floor manager who said the nomination and election of Ronald Reagan was necessary "for the survival of our country."

"I felt," said delegate Miller, with no embarrassment, "like I was going forth on a holy crusade. We had the dedication," she said.

"That's why we won. The delegate who is for Reagan is for Reagan. The delegate who is for (President) Ford is just the normal kind of Republican Party person going along with the power structure."

Could she now transfer that dedication to the election of Mr. Ford? she was asked. "No way," she said. "I'll support the whole Republican ticket, and we'll do the routine, mechanical work of the campaign. But there's no way it can be the same."

Lydia Miller's comment defines the most immediate problem facing the President as he begins his uphill race against Jimmy Carter: enlisting the enthusiasm, and not the mere acquiescence, of the fervent few who do most of the work in the minority Republican Party.

She is a particularly important symbol of the Ford problem, for on the day before the President's nomination, she was elected chairman of the Jackson County (Kansas City) Republican Committee. Miller upset a pro-Ford incumbent, using the same organization of enthusiastic volunteers who had labored with her in the Reagan cause.

That kind of upheaval happened all across the country this spring and summer, as a direct by-product of the former California governor's challenge to the President.

In Texas, California, and many of the smaller border, Midwestern and



David S. Broder

Western states vital to Mr. Ford's chances, the party organization on which he now depends is in the hands of people who supported his opponent.

A few of them, plainly, will sit on their hands. But most, like Miller, will give their support to the nominee, either out of a sense of party loyalty or because they believe, as she says, that "Jimmy Carter would be a disaster."

But if that support is to be more than "routine and mechanical," if it is to reach the level of effort required for a minority-party candidate to win, Mr. Ford will have to show the Lydia Millers of the Republican Party something more than he has shown so far.

It will not be easy, because, Miller says, the workhorses of the Republican Party tend to "pick the people and causes for which we work."

Like so many others of her age, Miller came to politics in the early 1960's as "a follower of Barry Goldwater." She was "deflated badly" by his defeat in 1964, but stayed active in the GOP, becoming a ward committeewoman.

She worked for conservative candidates in Missouri, most of them also losers, organized against the Equal Rights Amendment, helped with the Women's Anti-Crime Crusade and is active in a local group opposing any tax increase of any kind.

Understandably, she preferred Reagan's conservative ideology to Mr. Ford's middle-road Republicanism; Reagan has been her candidate for President since 1967. But, interestingly, she says the main difference between the two, in her view, is that Reagan had "electability," and Mr. Ford does not. "I'll do what I can" for the President, she says, "but I just don't see how he can win."

Her description of Mr. Ford is a classic of damning with faint praise:

"He's an honest, decent man, but he simply does not have leadership

qualities. His oral communication skills are not good. He's absent, but he's an appointee. Had it not been for Watergate, Mr. Ford would have been President. He has been very happy to spend his life for the President, she says, "but I just don't see how he can win."

Turning Lydia Miller into a partisan will not be easy for Ford. But without her and in Republican organizations in the country, he probably hope to remain President.

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