

Opinions

Hollings best qualified presidential candidate

By Cliff Blue

SENATOR HOLLINGS. . . Of all the present Democratic candidates for the Presidential nomination, Fritz Hollings of South Carolina is by far the best qualified.

Hollings is not winning high rating in the polls, and it will take a remarkable turn of events for him to be nominated. But he appears to have the qualifications. He has made a good record, a progressive record, in every position he has served. He is an expert on defense and has long served on the Senate Armed Services Committee. He was chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, and has offered the best budget-balancing of any major political figure for two years or more.

He would freeze expenditures on almost everything for one year, adjusted for inflation.

He is not a claghorn reactionary but moderate in the middle of the road; too liberal for many southern conservatives but acceptable, in philosophy, to most Democrats, even liberals in the north. He knows the issues, is a student of facts, problems and solutions. He looks the part, is a fine debater and speaker, even though his Charleston accent takes some getting used to. (But so did John Kennedy's New England tones.)

People and Issues

He tells senior citizens he would ask them to forego real increases in social security for one year—to balance the budget. He would like to get "our boys" out of Lebanon, but he does favor a nuclear freeze. He would accept a woman or black on his ticket, if nominated. He has spoken in favor of freedom of choice on abortion. He admits he favors right-to-work laws.

Hollings' big-chance—if he has one—is in New Hampshire. He and his people are working hard to finish first or second. If he does that, he might become known, might become a candidate with credibility. The odds, of course, are against him.

Here in North Carolina, former Governor Terry Sanford is on his team. Our second choice would be U.S. Senator John Glenn. We think he is a reasonable man. This is about as far as we would like to go at this time with any hopes of winning.

SUICIDE RATE UP. . . The U.S. suicide rate has increased dramatically in the last 25 years, especially among the young people between 15 and 24 years of age, say the American Council of Life Insurance.

WOMEN GAINING. . . Add public relations to the list of occupations in which women are making impressive strides. The 1979 Public Relations Executives, carries biographies of PR professionals with at least five years of experience. The 1979 directory listed 2,599 PR professionals, of whom less than 14 percent were

women. On the current directory, about 20 percent of the 4,100 professionals profiled are women.

WORKING WOMEN. . . Over the past 25 years, women have accounted for three out of every five new members of the work force. Between 1948 and 1982, the number of working women increased by 176 percent while the number of working men increased by only 43 percent.

INCOME RISES. . . Personal income in the United States rose by 1.2 percent in October, says the American Council of Life Insurance. This was the largest percentage gain since August 1981, according to recent Commerce Department reports. In addition to earning more, Americans are saving a little more, too. The savings rate 4.9 percent of personal disposal income in Sept. to 5.5 percent in October.

LOWER INTEREST? . . "Lower interest rates are predicted for early 1984 amid further signs that economic growth has moderated," says the Wall Street Journal. "Those signs include the government report that the index of leading economic indicators fell in November."

COMMUNITY COLLEGE. . . North Carolina's community college system starts the new year off with each of the 58 institutions now being accredited. Brunswick Technical College in Supply—the system's newest institution—was notified recently that it has received accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The institution began offering classes in 1980.



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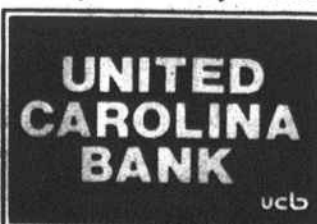


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Assad and Reagan should hold meeting

by Richard Viguerie

Support for the presence of American troops in Lebanon is collapsing.

Such prominent Senators as Charles Percy (R-Ill.), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, are calling for withdrawal. Leading Democrats in Congress have done likewise.

Liberal and conservative members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, have come to the conclusion that the Marines in Lebanon should be pulled out. The growing perception is that the U.S. troops are no longer a peacekeeping force; rather, that their presence ensures a continuation of the conflict that has torn that country apart.

Probably the only questions that remain are when will our troops come home and what kind of situation they will leave behind.

The decision of Syrian President Hafez Assad to free Lt. Robert Goodman is a smart public relations move; it almost makes Mr. Assad seem like a reasonable person to the U.S. public. But it may also be an olive branch held out to President Reagan, a signal that Mr. Assad wants to sit down and talk.

In the media hype and general excitement over Jesse Jackson's triumph in freeing Lt. Goodman, it has been mostly ignored that the U.S. Ambassador to Syria, Robert Paganelli, was included in the arrangements.

In other words, Mr. Assad did not try to humiliate the Reagan Administration by excluding its representative. The Syrian President dropped his earlier demands that the U.S. withdraw first, or that reconnaissance flights be

halted, before the lieutenant would be released.

Like many other left-leaning dictators around the world, Pres. Assad would like to free his country from dependence upon the Soviet Union. He is not the type of leader who tolerates being bullied, and it may give him a great deal of pleasure to tell the Soviets to take a hike, as the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat did in 1972. But, given the unreliability of the United States as an ally during the 1970's and Israel's "sister-state" relationship with the U.S., Mr. Assad may be reluctant to take the risks to which defiance of the USSR would expose him.

However, President Reagan should aggressively pursue this possible historic opportunity to make Mr. Assad less dependent upon Moscow. One suggestion would be that the two presidents meet as soon as possible to discuss a solution to the crisis in Lebanon.

In fact, Mr. Reagan should consider meeting with all the heads of state who are involved. He should invite the leaders of Syria, Israel, Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan to meet with him here in Washington or any other suitable U.S. location to work out a plan to end the conflict.

If all reasonable efforts fail to bring peace to Lebanon, then we should pull marines out of Lebanon and let the Syrians and Israelis slug it out.

For now, though, there is a clear sign that Mr. Assad wants to talk. In the spirit of Camp David and President Reagan's September, 1982 peace initiative, the leaders of the U.S. and Syria might have the opportunity to sit down and bring this episode to a conclusion.

As the late Sir. Winston Churchill said, "It is better to jaw, jaw than to war, war."

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