

front

The New York Times

Says

“Mr. Taft can't win”

## MR. TAFT CAN'T WIN—I

Nearly twenty-five years have passed since the Republican party has elected a President of the United States. This year the Republican party has a real chance to return to power. The question to be decided next week at Chicago is whether the party will seize this chance by nominating a candidate who has an excellent chance to win—Dwight Eisenhower—or whether it will muff this chance by nominating a candidate who is almost certain to lose—Robert A. Taft.

In a series of editorials, of which this is the first, we shall offer the evidence on which we base our judgment that Senator Taft, if nominated in July, cannot be elected in November.

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We begin with a consideration of Senator Taft's political support, as it has been revealed in the primaries and the state conventions. For this purpose we turn to the tabulation of delegates made by The Associated Press as the most impartial and reliable estimate available.

This estimate gives Mr. Taft 475 first-ballot votes.

From what states do these votes come?

We note at once that a very large proportion of them come from the Southern states and the border states which are normally Democratic territory. In fact, no fewer than 126 of Mr. Taft's 475 votes come from this area, not counting the contested seats in a number of Southern states.

The support of these states is very useful at a Republican convention. It can be used to help win a Republican nomination. But the support of these states is usually of very little significance so far as the election of a Republican candidate is concerned. General Eisenhower's great personal popularity in the South (witness Texas) might give the Republicans a chance in some of these states. But the Republican party has not carried a single one of them in any Presidential election since 1928, and no realistic observer seriously thinks that Mr. Taft could perform that miracle now.

Well over a quarter of Mr. Taft's present strength at Chicago thus represents territory which will be useless to the Republican party in November if Mr. Taft is the nominee.

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We turn next to a group of states, outside of the South, where Mr. Taft is also strong, but where the Democratic party is still stronger.

This group of states—twelve of them—includes Arizona, California, Idaho, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Utah and Washington. Every one of these states has voted consistently for the Democratic party in every one of the last five Presidential elections.

Here again Mr. Taft is strong—strong where it counts least, so far as his party's chances in November are concerned. Of his presently pledged delegates at Chicago no fewer than 127 come from this strong non-Southern Democratic territory.

Thus, to recapitulate at this point, the core of Mr. Taft's delegate strength—253 delegates, or 53 per cent of his present total—comes from states that he cannot reasonably be expected to carry in November.

If the disputed Southern votes should be

added to the Taft total (as they would be if the convention should succumb to the indicated strong-arm strategy of the Taft forces) something like 70 per cent of Mr. Taft's first-ballot strength will come precisely from the states that are almost certain to vote Democratic when the chips are down.

These are the states where the Republican party vastly prefers Mr. Taft to General Eisenhower.

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Let us now turn to the other side of the picture.

There are fifteen states that now have Republican Governors and Republican majorities in both houses of their Legislatures. Obviously these are states with strong local Republican organization. Here Senator Taft has only 117 delegates, compared to 232 for General Eisenhower, while 117 are in dispute, uncommitted or for favorite sons.

Thus in the states where the G. O. P. is already strong, states which now seem indispensable to a Republican victory, the sentiment as reflected by the committed delegates is almost two to one for Eisenhower.

It may be argued, of course, that merely because General Eisenhower has shown great strength in these pivotal states it does not necessarily follow that these same states could not be carried by Mr. Taft if he were nominated at Chicago. This is true. But there is one important fact to be noted here. In some of the most important of those states the margin of Republican victory in the last Presidential election was extremely narrow—for example, less than 5 per cent of the popular vote in the vital states of New York and Pennsylvania.

Certainly Republican chances will be brighter if the party goes into these states with a candidate who has demonstrated his great popularity in this very area.

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Finally, let us look at the record of the sixteen states (with 186 electoral votes) that voted Republican in the last Presidential election.

In these states (ten of which have Republican Governors and Legislatures) General Eisenhower has 252 delegates to 119 for Mr. Taft, while ninety-seven are for favorite sons or uncommitted. In this category the figures show that of those delegates who have declared themselves more than twice as many are for General Eisenhower as for Mr. Taft. And let it be noted that in no less than ten of these sixteen Republican states a shift of only 5 per cent of the votes would have put them in the Democratic column in the last Presidential election.

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The central fact in all this is crystal clear. It is simply that Mr. Taft is getting a disproportionate amount of his delegate strength from states which the Republicans cannot hope to carry, but in the areas where the Republicans are a live party and have a real possibility of victory General Eisenhower is obviously the favorite candidate.

We think it is a logical deduction that the Republican party has a far better chance to win next November with General Eisenhower than with Mr. Taft.



## MR. TAFT CAN'T WIN—II

Under this heading yesterday we examined Senator Taft's strength in delegates to the Republican National Convention, and found—

(1) That more than half of his delegates represent states in the Solid South and elsewhere which the Republican party under his leadership would have little or no chance of carrying, and

(2) That in the states which the Republican party does have a real chance of carrying General Eisenhower is far stronger than Mr. Taft—in delegates as well as in popular support.

We turn now to the argument made by Mr. Taft's partisans that, despite his demonstrated weakness in this second group of states, his uncompromising type of campaign would bring out a hidden pro-Republican vote that could elect him in November.

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Here is what Mr. Taft himself said on this subject on June 12: “\* \* \* Who are the independents? \* \* \* In the last election 35,000,000 people stayed at home and didn't vote at all who could have voted, and I suppose 25,000,000 of them would call themselves independents. Why didn't they vote? Because apparently they couldn't see that it made any difference to them who won the election. \* \* \* We've got to appeal to that group of independents. \* \* \* I say if you could bring a number [Mr. Taft suggested about 8,000,000] of these so-called independents and Republicans and Democrats who haven't voted to the polls, you can win an election.

\* \* \*

... points the other way. The normal “independent” or occasional voter is neither Republican nor even particularly anti-New Deal or anti-Fair Deal. On the contrary, he is much more likely to be pro-Democrat.

For evidence on this very point let us look at the record of every national election since 1940, when Mr. Taft first became a serious contender for the Republican Presidential nomination. For purposes of accurate comparison we take the total countrywide vote for the 435 members of the House of Representatives. In that year of 1940 nearly 47,000,000 ballots were cast for members of the House, almost 11,000,000 more than in 1938. In 1940 the Democrats won 53.1 per cent of the major party vote, compared to 50.8 in 1938. Thus an increase in the national vote benefited the Democrats.

In 1942, an off year, the total national vote dropped precipitously (by nearly 19,000,000), and so did the Democratic percentage of the major party vote, which fell from 53.1 to 48. In that low-vote year the Republicans gained 47 members of the House. Thus a decrease in the national vote benefited the Republicans.

In 1944 the national vote shot up to 45,000,000, and so did the Democratic percentage of the major party vote, to 52.2. Incidentally, the Democrats picked up twenty-one House seats that year, and the Republicans lost nineteen. And so again the Democrats, rather than the Republicans, benefited from an increase in total national vote.

In 1946 the national vote for members of the House of Representatives dropped almost 11,000,000 to a total of only 34,400,000. What happened? The Democratic percentage of ma-

for party vote slid to 45.7, and for the first time since 1930 the Democrats were a minority in the House. The Republicans benefited to the tune of fifty-six seats, and their percentage of the major-party total jumped to 54.3. Once more a low-vote year meant Republican gains.

In 1948 the national vote went up again to nearly 46,000,000, and the Democratic percentage likewise rose to 53.7. The Democrats again gained when more people went to the polls.

Two years later, in 1950, the House vote dropped by 5,500,000, and down went the Democratic percentage to a bare majority of 50.3. The Republican percentage rose correspondingly; and the Republicans also picked up twenty-eight House seats.

The assumption of Mr. Taft's partisans is that large numbers of people who have never voted at all will now vote suddenly in 1952, and vote for Mr. Taft. But on the consistent evidence of the last dozen or more years it is apparent that when the voters flock to the polls it is the Democrats rather than the Republicans who are the principal gainers; and when the voters stay away from the polls it is the Democrats rather than the Republicans who are the principal losers. There is nothing in the facts even to indicate a large reserve of Republican votes. If the votes needed to win are to be won by the Republicans, they will have to come largely from the people who in the past have voted Democratic when they have voted at all.

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Mr. Taft's partisans point to the Ohio Senatorial election of 1950 to show that a large vote helps Mr. Taft instead of hurting him. His victory that year was overwhelming—he won with a majority of nearly 58 per cent. But Mr. Taft had the great advantage of running against a notoriously weak candidate. Furthermore, crude efforts of labor bosses both inside and outside the state to defeat Mr. Taft backfired in that election and many people expressed their justified resentment at such high-handed tactics by voting for him for Senator, which is, of course, quite different from voting for him for President.

\* \* \*

The Republican nominee will never be elected if he must rely on a store of imagined reserve votes. The Republican party is today the minority party in this country, and the only way it can win the election of 1952 is to induce Democrats and independents—whether or not they have heretofore been voters—to come over to the Republican side. For reasons which we shall discuss tomorrow, we believe that Mr. Taft cannot do this, while General Eisenhower can.

## MR. TAFT CAN'T WIN—III

In two previous editorials on this subject we have pointed out that Senator Taft's delegate strength at the Republican National Convention rests to an important degree on states that cannot help the Republicans in the election, because these states are overwhelmingly or traditionally Democratic; and that in other states which the Republicans have a chance to win, and need to win, General Eisenhower has greater appeal than Senator Taft. We have also maintained that if Mr. Taft should be nominated it is highly unlikely that he could



call up any reserve Republican strength, because the record indicates that when new or irregular voters go to the polls they tend to vote Democratic and not Republican.

We conclude this series with the argument that the Taft record and campaign are of such a character that the Senator is not likely to pick up the independent or Democratic votes which the Republicans must have to succeed. General Eisenhower, on the other hand, is in a position to attract precisely that additional support that can spell the difference between Republican victory and one more bitter, frustrating and ruinous Republican defeat.

\* \* \*

We do not think that Mr. Taft can attract any substantial proportion of the normally independent or Democratic vote on the basis of his views on foreign policy. Although Mr. Taft's position in this field seems to have undergone considerable modification, he still votes for crippling reductions in proposed funds for the mutual security program, and he still argues for a slash of over 20 per cent in our military budget. In his more than thirteen years in the Senate Mr. Taft has usually voted for the reductions, limitations and restrictions that would have the purpose and effect of wrecking important proposals affecting foreign policy, or he has voted to kill them outright.

\* \* \*

Thus Mr. Taft voted against one-year conscription on Aug. 28, 1940 (shortly after the fall of France), because the emergency was not "one which justifies the drafting of men"; he voted against Lend-Lease on March 8, 1941; he voted against eighteen-month extension of Selective Service on Aug. 7, four months before Pearl Harbor; he voted against the second Lend-Lease appropriation that October; he voted to cut drastically the first Marshall Plan appropriation in 1948; he voted in 1948—as Russia's post-war policy was becoming increasingly obvious—to put Selective Service on a "stand-by" basis and to reduce the period of service; he voted against the North Atlantic Pact; he voted against European arms aid in 1949, saying the military assistance program would "tend toward the incitement of Russia to war"; he voted against Point Four; and so on almost ad infinitum.

We do not believe that this is the kind of record that will attract the millions of Americans who now wish to get rid of the barnacle-encrusted Democratic Administration, but who in almost every national election have shown their support of the basic principles of collective security. We certainly do not argue that the Administration's foreign policy has been 100 per cent right; but the country's voting record over the period that Mr. Taft has been in Congress indicates that the American people on the whole reject his type of thinking on foreign policy. There is simply no evidence at all to indicate that the non-voting masses on whom Mr. Taft seems to rely are more sympathetic to his view on these matters than those who normally go to the polls; and there is, in fact, considerable evidence to the contrary.

What about General Eisenhower? He stands for what is best in the Administration's foreign policy toward Europe; and yet he does not have the albatross of our failures in the Far

East hanging about his neck. We are supporting him because he stands now, as he always has, for wholehearted recognition of America's inescapable responsibilities in the world. This means an unhedging determination to help Europe to help itself through the mutual security and similar programs; it means firm links with the democracies of the Old World through NATO and related treaties; it means an ability to operate with allies in war—such as Korea—as well as in peace; it means an understanding of the military requirements with which our world position inevitably burdens our country. We think the American people have no real doubt as to how General Eisenhower stands on these questions; and to the extent that Democrats, independents and habitual non-voters who give a thought to such problems can be attracted into Republican ranks this year we think it evident that General Eisenhower and not Mr. Taft can attract them.

\* \* \*

What about domestic policy? Broadly speaking, it is the liberal wing of the Republican party that supports General Eisenhower—the Duffs, the Lodges, the Deweys, the Morses—and even those of the liberal wing who do not support him, such as Governor Warren, are universally considered to be on Eisenhower's side if and when a choice has to be made. Conversely, it is the Old Guard of the Republican party from which Senator Taft derives much of his support, and the Senator has played further into their hands by linking himself in one way or another with the MacArthur and the McCarthy wings as well. In the last analysis, it is the public impression, and a justified one, that Senator Taft—no matter how liberal his views on such questions as housing may be—is associated with the conservative element of the party, while General Eisenhower—no matter how conservative his views on such questions as F. E. P. C. may be—is associated with the liberal element of the party.

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If the Republicans nominate Mr. Taft they cannot expect to reach the middle-of-the-roads and the liberals who would like to vote Republican this year because they are weary of the slowly petrifying Democratic Administration. Furthermore, the primaries in both parties have repeatedly demonstrated that the people want new faces, new personalities and some of the inspiration that has been noticeably lacking in Washington. General Eisenhower meets this need and Senator Taft does not.

We believe that if the Republican party nominates Senator Taft at next week's convention it will discover—too late—that all three points we have sought to make in this series of editorials are true:

(1) Senator Taft's great delegate strength does not reflect genuine popular strength;

(2) Senator Taft can call up very little if any reserve Republican strength from among habitual or occasional non-voters because they are not Republicans;

(3) Senator Taft's record and his campaign will fail to attract the independent and Democratic vote necessary for any Republican to win the election.

We think the Republican party will be serving its own interests as well as the much more important interests of the nation if it nominates General Eisenhower for President.

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**Everyone says**

**“Eisenhower**

**Can Win”**

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