

G.O.P CONVENTION

Cheney accepts veep role, attacks Clinton

By Brian Carlson
Staff writer

PHILADELPHIA — Republican vice presidential nominee and Lincoln native Dick Cheney launched broadsides at the Clinton administration on Wednesday night, urging voters to send George W. Bush to the White House to restore "decency and integrity" to the presidency.

Again and again in his acceptance speech, Cheney criticized President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, Bush's rival for the presidency, for failing to provide principled leadership during the last eight years.

"When I look at the administration now in Washington, I am dismayed by opportunities squandered," he said. "Saddened by what might have been, but never was."

"These have been years of prosperity in our land, but little purpose in the White House."

Bush, by contrast, is the man who can change the tone, Cheney said.

"The wheel has turned, and it is time, it is time for them to go," he said.

"George W. Bush will repair what has been damaged. On the

first hour of the first day, he will restore decency and integrity to the Oval Office."

Cheney's speech contrasted with the tone of the convention thus far, in which the Republicans have sought to promote a positive campaign message.

The Gore campaign quickly found fault with Cheney's speech, issuing a statement criticizing it.

"Because he could not defend his record on the Bush agenda, Dick Cheney tonight delivered one of the most negative Republican convention speeches since Pat Buchanan," the statement read. "The mask is off the GOP masquerade ball."

Cheney was born in Lincoln and lived there for the first 12 years of his life. He represented Wyoming in Congress for 10 years and served as defense secretary under Bush's father, former President George H.W. Bush.

In the days since Bush selected him, Cheney has been praised by supporters as a wise elder statesman but derided by critics as too conservative.

Cheney praised Gov. Bush for improving educational test

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Dick Cheney
Republican vice-presidential candidate

scores, reducing taxes and passing tort reforms in Texas. He also praised Bush's ability to work in a bipartisan fashion.

But mostly, Cheney criticized his opponents' character and tactics.

"In this election, they will speak endlessly of risk. We will speak of progress," he said. "They will make accusations. We will make proposals. They will need fear. We will appeal to hope."

Cheney also pledged to help rebuild the military and restore its morale.

"Soon, our men and women in uniform will once again have a commander-in-chief they can respect, one who understands

their mission and restores their morale," he said.

Several members of the Nebraska delegation said Cheney added depth to the Bush ticket and would reassure voters that a Bush administration would be competent to handle military and foreign policy issues.

Gen. Colin Powell has been mentioned as a possible secretary of state, a possibility bolstered by Bush's statement Monday night that he hoped Powell's "best service to his country is still ahead."

Condoleezza Rice, who served in President Bush's administration and addressed this year's convention, may be tapped as national security adviser.

"George W. Bush will put together one of the best national security teams that we've seen in modern history," Sen. Chuck Hagel said in an interview.

Hagel himself has been mentioned as a possible secretary of defense, although he downplayed such talk in an interview.

"After the election, if there are subsequent conversations, we will deal with it at that time," he said.

He said his friend, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., also would be a strong candidate for secretary of defense.

Hagel also received close consideration to be Bush's running mate, but he said he was "relieved" he was not selected.

"I never believed I could give George W. Bush what he needed," he said. "What he needed was Dick Cheney."

Gov. Mike Johanns agreed. He criticized Gore and the Democrats for seeking to "demonize" Cheney, who he said had a "gold-plated resume."

"This is going to be an ugly campaign on Al Gore's part," he said. "It will be brutal. He's an attack dog. A pit bull is what he is."

Hagel says Kerrey would add luster to Democratic platform

By Brian Carlson
Staff writer

PHILADELPHIA — With Sen. Bob Kerrey's name being circulated as a possible running mate for Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore, his Senate colleague said Kerrey would be a "great addition" to the ticket.

Sen. Chuck Hagel said Kerrey, who is not seeking re-election to the Senate, could be a strong running mate for Gore if the two could manage their differences on particular issues.

"I am a great admirer of Bob Kerrey," Hagel said in an interview at the Republican National Convention. "Whether that would be a fit or not, I don't know."

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Sen. Chuck Hagel

Kerrey's name has been mentioned more frequently by analysts and pundits in recent days. Karl Rove, campaign strategist for Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush, told CNN recently that Kerrey would add strength to the Democratic ticket. Some CNN analysts, such as Jeff Greenfield and Tucker Carlson, have said the same recently.

Kerrey has often feuded with President Clinton, and he supported former Sen.

Bill Bradley's unsuccessful primary challenge to Gore.

The two disagree on issues such as Social Security. Kerrey supports allowing workers to invest a portion of their Social Security payroll taxes in private accounts. Gore does not.

"Whether Gore and Kerrey can bridge their differences on issues such as Social Security, where the gap is fairly wide, I don't know," Hagel said.

"That's why it's not my decision to make."

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