POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Party Hoppers

"The Party Switchers" by Ronald Brownstein, in *The National Journal* (Oct. 25, 1986), 1730 M St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

"Switching political parties can be embarrassing," said the narrator of a television pitch used by Nevada Democrat Harry M. Reid in his 1986 campaign for the U.S. Senate. "Just ask Jim Santini."

Ex-Democrat Santini had switched to the G.O.P. in 1985. Reid reminded voters of the old days, when Santini's new Republican friends denounced him. (Reid won last November's election handily.)

Party switching is not new, observes Brownstein, a *National Journal* reporter. But since the landslide 1980 election of (former Democrat) Ronald Reagan, the switching has changed directions. During the 1960s and 1970s, when the Democrats were riding particularly high, especially in Congress and in statehouses, some Republicans—e.g., New York representative Ogden Reid, Michigan representative (now senator) Donald Riegle, former New York mayor John Lindsay—joined them. Then came the Great Society, the Vietnam War, "stagflation," the tax revolt—and a new conservatism among voters. Republicans such as Texas senator Phil Gramm (a Democrat until 1983) began wooing disaffected Democrats over to their side.

Yet last November many Republican newcomers fared poorly. Only six of 11 ex-Democrats who sought G.O.P. gubernatorial, House, and Senate nominations succeeded; only two—governor-elect Bob Martinez (R.-Fla.) Fla.) and congressman-elect Richard H. Baker (R.-La.)—won election.

Among the notable losers were Texas' Kent Hance and Wisconsin's Jonathan Barry, Democrats-turned-Republicans who were soundly defeated in primaries for governor by G.O.P. veterans. Both Nevada's Santini and former Democrat Linda Chavez (R.-Md.) lost Senate bids.

Convert candidates, says Brownstein, always lose some credibility with voters, particularly Republican voters. Indeed, "when the primary field is crowded, the Democratic credentials of the party switchers can stand out like a Mondale-Ferraro button at a Republican convention."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Dealing with New Delhi

"India and the United States: Why Detente Won't Happen" by Maya Chadda, in *Asian Survey* (Oct. 1986), Univ. of Calif., Berkeley, Calif. 94720.

August 1982: Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi goes to Washington. May 1985: A festival of India begins in the United States. June 1985: India's new prime minister—Gandhi's son, Rajiv—visits the White House.

Are these signs of a blossoming Indo-American romance?

Not really, says Chadda, a political scientist at William Paterson College. Despite Rajiv Gandhi's Western leanings, Chadda notes that economic and political ties between the United States and India have, in many

ways, deteriorated over the last few years. Whereas U.S. trade with China increased by 25 percent during the first nine months of 1985, U.S. trade with India dropped 10 percent from its peak level—$4 billion in 1983.

The problem is Pakistan, says Chadda. Indian officials view their Muslim neighbor (pop.: 100 million) as a constant threat to India's 763 million, primarily Hindu, people. The countries clash over territorial rights in Kashmir, nuclear issues, and Pakistan's support of India's Sikh extremists, who assassinated Indira Gandhi in 1984. But the White House continues to view Pakistan, bordering on both the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, as an ally. Thus, unlike India, which received 82 percent of its arms from Moscow between 1976 and 1980, Pakistan is U.S.-supplied. It received U.S. aid worth $4.02 billion in 1986; India got $311,000.

While U.S. policy makers must consider several factors—including the Iran-Iraq War and the Soviet attempt to subjugate Afghanistan—in formulating Asian policy, the Indians' main concerns are the security of their Chinese and Pakistani borders. "Strategic ties," remarks Chadda, "are forged in response to a perception of common threats. India and the U.S. do not share common threats." The basic Asian political alignments—U.S.-China-Pakistan, and USSR-India-Afghanistan—remain.

The Carrier Gamble

"Large Carriers: A Matter of Time" by Commander E. J. Ortlieb, in *Proceedings* (Oct. 1986), U.S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, Md. 21402.

The U.S. Navy has worked hard to prolong the life of its capital ships, big aircraft carriers. The 15 behemoths now in commission—with nearly 100 aircraft and more than 6,000 crewmen apiece—will serve 40-plus years.

That worries Ortlieb, a systems analyst and retired submarine officer. Given the ships' longevity, he says, the Navy's goals of operating 15 carrier battle groups—a carrier plus supporting craft—and building new carriers until "at least" the late 1990s means that such vessels will remain America's capital ships "for another half-century." Is that wise? he asks.

Carrier defenders say that the ships are irreplaceable; for instance, U.S. power in the Middle East is projected mainly by carrier groups in the Mediterranean and in the Indian Ocean. And modern carriers have jet aircraft, nuclear power, and the protection of Aegis cruisers and nuclear attack submarines. Critics point out that carriers face modern *threats* (e.g., homing torpedoes, missiles), and that their survivability has not been tested in combat since World War II.

Ortlieb adds another worry, a historical one: the shrinking time between a weapon's dominance and its decline. Consider, he says:

- The galley ruled the Mediterranean for 1,000 years, as did the Norse longboat elsewhere. But sailing warships made both extinct.
- Steam-driven ironclads outmoded sailing ships within 400 years.
- As the dreadnought ushered in the era of heavily armored, centerline-gun battleships, ironclads became obsolete within 60 years.
- World War II carriers dethroned battleships within 40 years.

A sure sign that "doom is approaching" for a naval weapon, Ortlieb