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Andrus may not run in '84

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Former Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus said Tuesday he will reveal his 1984 political plans next week, but all signs point to the fact he will sit out the campaign for U.S. senator.

The former Democratic chief executive has said he would consider a bid to unseat Sen. James McClure, R-Idaho, but declined in a Post-Register telephone interview to announce official plans. He said he would do that May 12 at a talk at the Idaho Press Club luncheon in Boise.

Giving a clue, however, he said,



Cecil Andrus

"Your analysis in the past has been accurate." Previous stories by this writer have said he does not care to live in Washington, D.C., (in fact he has built a home in Boise). He has said numerous times that his term as governor was the most delightful job he has ever held.

The fact he detests Washington and loves Idaho would strongly

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indicate he will not seek a job that would require him to live in the city by the Potomac River.

Those feelings strengthen beliefs that he may run in 1986 to succeed Gov. John V. Evans, who has announced he will not seek re-election. Andrus said it is too far in advance to say for sure at this time, but added he has not ruled it out.

Andrus was considered among the most popular cabinet members in Washington, but he constantly yearned to return to Idaho. He announced late in the term he would not serve another term, regardless of whether Carter were re-elected.

In several interviews he described the interior job "as a meat grinder" and added he was tired of "the political games they play in Washington."

McClure frankly considers Andrus as his most formidable prospective challenger but feels his Republican label and position in the Senate as Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee chairman and Conference Chairman (third highest in leadership) gives him a definite advantage.

McClure, however, alienated many who supported him when he

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took an active part in the 1980 campaign to oust U.S. Sen Frank Church.

Andrus works in a private consulting business that relates mostly to environment and sits on the boards of directors of several large firms.

Asked how he is doing financially, he said "I'm doing fine."

He said he believes McClure is vulnerable on several issues, saying McClure has gone along with President Reagan in voting for increased taxes and the highest budget deficits in the nation's history. Andrus said McClure also protects vested interests in easing wilderness designations in the nation's forests.

If Andrus doesn't run, others mentioned as possible contenders are Sen. John Peavey, Carey, and former Senate Minority Leader Ron Twilegar, Boise attorney and business executive. Both have told this writer they might consider it.

In this context, Evans has been mentioned as a possible contender for the Senate seat held by Steve Symms, whose term will expire in 1986. Evans' term as governor also is up in 1986.

Church also has been mentioned, but has said he is not interested in seeking another elective office and certainly not in regaining the seat he lost to Symms.

He acknowledges he earns far more working at a Washington law firm than the \$60,000 annual salary he received as a senator. He has said he would consider a cabinet or other high government post if a Democratic president is elected in 1984.

Andrus said he felt his four-year term as interior secretary was one of balance between developing natural resources and protecting the environment.

In 1970, Andrus defeated Republican Gov. Don Samuelson by 11,000 votes, becoming Idaho's first Democratic governor in 24 years. Democrats have retained the seat ever since, a remarkable achievement considering the state's generally Republican nature. The entire U.S. congressional delegation as well as the state Legislature is Republican, as well as four out of seven top state elective offices.

Andrus was re-elected in 1974 with 71 percent of the vote, carrying 43 of the state's 44 counties, Lemhi excepted. He beat a formidable Republican challenger, Lt. Gov. Jack Murphy.

In 1966, Andrus lost to Samuelson by about 10,000 votes after Samuelson had eliminated Gov. Robert E. Smylie in the primary.