

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

Will Robert Michel run for President?

Sensitive ears at the annual meeting of the American Security Council here July 16 picked up a lot of quiet talk about House Minority Leader Robert Michel (R-Ill.) and his credentials as a Republican presidential contender.

There is a grave concern over George Bush's ability to succeed Reagan among all Republican circles, and "Reaganites," especially, are exploring stalking horses or alternatives, such as retiring Sen. Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), a close friend of the President. However, Laxalt, from one of the most sparsely populated states, has no real constituency of his own, and his business ties to casino operations in Nevada present an overwhelming obstacle. Most importantly, he is barely more personally appealing than Bush. This "personal" quality, for better or worse, is what many "insiders" feel is the key to Reagan's popularity.

Michel is from Peoria, Illinois, the middle of Middle America (his district includes Sangamon County, where Abe Lincoln got his start). As the popular leader of Republicans in the House, he comes across as old fashioned, unpretentious, and a colorful orator (because of the rich baritone resonances of his voice—which he often uses to sing the National Anthem at public events).

In short, the 63-year-old lawmaker has certain personal qualities not unlike the President. What are his policies? Would he make a good President in a time of dire crisis? In the

world of "perceptions," the way the "regular" think, such realities don't enter in. You can say you read it here first.

Revelations on how the KGB runs Congress

In an autobiographical account of the alcoholic and compulsively homosexual behavior that ruined the career of former Rep. Robert Bauman (R-Md.), appearing as the cover story in the July issue of *The Washingtonian* magazine, the former head of the American Conservative Union tells enough about the seamy side of Washington officialdom to explain how blackmail by the KGB, FBI, or other "vested interests" determines what goes on here.

He alludes to three areas:

- Page boys. As a page boy himself in the early 1950s, Bauman was boarded at a house run by the mother of a man who openly ran a male brothel on Capitol Hill. The mother was aware of her son's activity, as were local police, and Bauman was encouraged by other page boys to frequent the brothel. That was at the time, Bauman says, when "not-so-quiet rumors were spread about Sen. Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin and his staff members."

In another case, Rep. Gerry Studds (D-Mass.) confessed to an affair with a page boy in the 1970s, as part of a massive scandal involving a network of page boys that broke in the early 1980s, and was covered up.

- Organized prostitution rings. According to Bauman, he was exposed in 1980 as the result of a task-force operation organized in 1978 involving the FBI, Secret Service, U.S. Attorney's staff, and D.C. police vice, sex, juvenile, and prostitution units.

This operation was going after "organized rings of imported male prostitutes" that were brought into Washington. According to Bauman,

"The names of prominent government officials appeared in the stories the young men [prostitutes] were telling police." Besides himself, Bauman says nine other members of the House and Senate were named, plus "high officials of the federal government, the D.C. government, aides to the White House staff of Jimmy Carter, as well as many well known in Washington military, business and professional circles."

Bauman describes how he himself was snared by the probe, but mentions nothing about what became of the investigations of the task force, overall.

- The full closets. Besides Studds, who was re-elected despite his admissions, and "another Congressman who appears at Washington's annual Gay Pride Day in a tank top with his usual young companion," Bauman claims there are many more "gay members of Congress who choose to be more closeted, but their names are known to many in and out of gay circles, including the media, which have their own homosexual contingent."

In fact, Bauman reveals, "The closets of Washington are full of gay Republicans and gay conservatives. Many of them serve in high Reagan-administration posts, some in the White House. They serve in Congress and populate the circles of power in law firms, public-relations firms, lobbying groups, political-action committees, conservative organizations, and the Republican Party. Their names appear on the White House guest list, and feature articles are written about them in the *Washington Post's* Style and Business sections."

What all of this reveals is a massive national security vulnerability. The fact that it continues while being known well enough for Bauman to write about it so candidly, without anything being done to clean it up, is perhaps the biggest scandal of all.