

Elephants & Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

Presidential field narrows—to nothing?

The shakeout of the presidential fields, on both the Democratic and Republican sides, during the last week in March has created a situation in which some sort of startling new developments on the American political scene are becoming increasingly likely.

Gephardt's withdrawal in the wake of his overwhelming defeat in the Michigan caucuses March 26 leaves only Jesse Jackson, Michael Dukakis, Al Gore, and Lyndon LaRouche to battle it out on the Democratic side. Bob Dole's pullout March 30 means that George Bush has the Republican field all to himself.

But if you thought this might simplify things, you're wrong. Political observers reflecting a variety of outlooks are pointing out that 1988 is like no other election year in recent memory, and that anything is possible.

On the Republican side, it's no secret that "Bushgate" is going into high gear. Just as *EIR* went to press, for instance, congressional investigators had managed to discover yet another heretofore secret document which further implicates Bush in the Iran-Contra quagmire.

The document, a 26-page agenda prepared by then-National Security Adviser John Poindexter, pulls the rug out from under Bush's claim that he was not aware that Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Secretary of State George Shultz strongly opposed the sale of arms to Iran.

Henry Kissinger, in a rare display of humor, observed recently that he

thinks the 1988 elections will unroll like this: The Democrats won't be able to agree on any nominee. The Republicans will select Vice President Bush, who will run unopposed—and lose.

Kissinger's comments were reported by the stalwartly Republican *Wall Street Journal* March 31, in a front-page article entitled "Bush's Role in Policy is Difficult to Discern," which compared the VP to Walter Mondale, and trotted out a host of distinguished types, including Jeane Kirkpatrick, to pronounce Bush an imbecile on foreign and economic policy. So much for Bush's political base.

The situation is just as unresolved on the Democratic side. With Jackson's Michigan victory making a brokered convention a certainty, the party's eminences grises find themselves in the unenviable position of trying to find a candidate who might, just might, engender some political support.

All of the alternate candidates who have been mentioned from time to time—Mario Cuomo, Sam Nunn, et al.—have drawbacks just as severe as any of the current official contenders.

The LaRouche option

The topsy-turvy presidential campaign, which reflects the confusion and disarray rampant in the ranks of America's policymaking elite, has created a unique opportunity for a political dark horse, especially one with a program for dealing with the country's economic and strategic crises, to be catapulted into the White House.

The person who obviously fits this description is Democratic candidate LaRouche. As LaRouche observed at a conference in Cologne, West Germany, in late March, since none of the candidates on the Democratic side is meant to win, his own chances of taking the party's nomination are better

than that of the other Democratic contenders.

LaRouche observed that while the Establishment is committed to preventing him from acquiring significant policymaking power, the imminent international financial blowout will be so severe that the "rules of the political game" as now played will fly out the window.

Fun and games

In the interim, however, the standard tactics of political campaigns prevail. The next major primary is New York's on April 19. This is an important political plum, not only because of the large number of delegates up for grabs, but also because it is considered a proving ground for national electability.

Tennessee Senator Al Gore, who pinned his strategy on doing well in the Southern Super Tuesday primaries, must win a northern state to entertain the hope of gaining even the VP slot on the Democratic ticket. He's gone out and hired image-maker David Garth, to sell him to New York voters.

Although he's doing poorly in the pre-primary polls, Gore has the support of important sections of the New York financial and political elite, including former ambassador to Italy Richard Gardner, who's been avidly pushing a Cuomo-Gore ticket.

On Garth's advice, Gore is playing to New York's substantial Jewish voting bloc, hitting at Jesse Jackson's support for the PLO and connections to Hitler admirer Louis Farrakhan.

Jackson, however, not only has New York's hefty black vote pretty much sewed up; he also enjoys the support of much of the state's trade union apparatus, which has a well-oiled turn-out-the-vote machine, and lots of money.