

Irangate fizzling as election issue

by Herbert Quinde

Since the Atlanta convention, Democratic Party strategists had been giggling with anticipation as they prepared for "The Duke" to "nuke" George Bush with what they hoped would be new hard-hitting revelations of the Vice President's involvement in the Iran-Contra fiasco. Although they are hard at work, the complex of ideologically motivated anti-Bush, Iran-Contra scandal-mongering reporters and "opposition research" campaign consultants, for the moment, seems caught in a time warp.

Serious investigations aimed at exposing the "secret government" manipulation of U.S. foreign policy would be a welcome contribution to a presidential race that has yet to address substantive issues.

With the Ollie North trial postponed until after election day, the Democrats have no ready-made forum. There is no new "smoking gun," and in frustration, the strategy is to rework old material, hopefully with new twists. One constipated journalist writing in *The Nation* dedicates an entire article to rehashing allegations of Bush's links to the international drug trade, defensively explaining why the search for the "smoking gun" is a waste of time.

A Washington journalist, widely respected as a tenacious Irangate investigator, admitted, "If the Democrats had anything, they would have already gone with it." One hardened cadre of the liberal-left community commented, "A year ago, Irangate represented a constitutional crisis; now, even in an election year, nothing seems to shock the moral sensibilities of the American public."

Nonetheless, Governor Dukakis seemingly went on the attack in a recent campaign speech, again raising the question, "Where was George?" when Project Democracy was baking cakes for and arming the terrorist regime of Ayatollah Khomeini.

Bunnies to the rescue

Providing artillery support for the assault is an article in the widely "read" October issue of *Playboy* magazine written by none other than "investigative reporter" Abbie Hoffman, the burned out hippie and founder of the pro-drug 1960s Yippies anarchist grouplet. The source of Hoffman's claims

is thought to be Jimmy Carter, whose daughter Amy is widely rumored to be Hoffman's current bedmate.

The *Playboy* article had been hyped as a "devastating" exposé of Bush's personal role in delaying the 1980 "October Surprise," the release of the American hostages held in Tehran sought by Carter, in exchange for weapons shipments once the Reagan administration moved into the White House. The article is of interest only because it gets off the Contra angle and begins to zero in on what would seem to be some vulnerabilities that Bush and company have from their back-channeling to the Iranians.

The article simply makes the point that from day one, the "secret government" inside the Reagan administration was locked into a deal to supply arms to the Ayatollah, as *EIR* has regularly documented throughout the Reagan-Bush years. Two hours after his inauguration, Reagan announced that the hostages had been freed. No one asked how the release came about, but it is clear that an earlier deal had been worked out. The article quotes former Iranian President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr saying that he had access to cables, copies of which he has offered to congressional investigators, allegedly proving that Bush was in Paris at the Hotel Raphael sometime in the fall of 1980, personally involved in the negotiations with several Iranians, including Hashemi Rafsanjani, Ayatollah Beheshti, Manucher Ghorbanifar, Cyrus Hashemi, and Albert Hakim.

Doubtful, but what's the big deal? The Carter administration was offering the same deal, and evidence previously published by *EIR* suggests that Khomeini assassins were allowed to kill anti-Khomeini exile Ali Tabatabai in Washington, D.C. as part of the negotiations.

A Mexican standoff?

Those who live in glass houses. . . . It was a Democratic administration that established the policy of negotiating with a fanatical terrorist regime which was continued by a "secret government" within the Reagan administration. It was under a Democratic President, Jimmy Carter, that the Central Intelligence Agency, then headed by the liberal Adm. Stansfield Turner, toppled the Shah of Iran and eventually brought Khomeini to power. It was Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who said, "Islamic fundamentalism is a bulwark against communism." It was Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, a senior member of the Establishment, and his men at the State Department who were selling Khomeini as an "American asset" as early as 1978.

Will the story go any further? Only if the Democrats figure out how to damage-control their end of the deal.

Dukakis could take a chance. He could say, "Yes, Carter played the game also, but I never will." But hanging out a Democratic President to dry like that opens a Pandora's box which the liberal Establishment doesn't need just now, as the opposition grows to their appeasement of the other Michael at the Kremlin. So, it looks like a Mexican stand-off.