

Anti-Dukakis vote elects George Bush

by Kathleen Klenetsky

The American people dealt a resounding defeat to the most corrupt factions of the U.S. Establishment Nov. 8, when they overwhelmingly rejected Democrat Michael Dukakis's bid to become President.

Although the voter turnout was the lowest in 40 years, reflecting the general lack of enthusiasm for either the Republican or Democratic standard bearer, Bush's margin of victory was significant: He won 40 states to Dukakis's 10, garnering 426 electoral votes to his opponent's 112. His popular vote margin was 54-46, and he not only swept the South and Mountain states, but also took several of the major industrial heartland states, including Pennsylvania and Ohio, as well as hotly contested California.

Now that the menace represented by Dukakis and his Harvard handlers has been put back in its box, the next major battle in the United States will be over the composition and course of the incoming Bush administration. While Bush is rooted in the liberal wing of the Eastern Establishment, he has exhibited sufficient openness on certain vital issues—notably the Soviet threat—to indicate his susceptibility to being moved in the right direction by the right political conditions. The principal danger is that Bush will be so overwhelmed by one crisis after another (a financial crash followed by some Soviet provocation is a likely scenario), that he will be stampeded into panic reactions (draconian budget cuts, or major concessions to the Soviets on the SDI, for example) that will only make matters much worse.

No to the new Mussolini

Despite all the talk about a last-minute Democratic surge and a major upset, Dukakis never really recovered from the devastating blow delivered him shortly after his nomination by this news service's exposé of his mental instability.

Dukakis came out of the Democratic convention in late July with a 17-point lead over Bush, but that evaporated when the question of whether Dukakis was mentally capable of holding the highest office in the land broke into the international media in early August. Dukakis aides bitterly blamed the flap over their candidate's mental fitness for the paralysis which gripped him in August, and from which he rallied, barely, only at the end of the race. Even after the press began screaming that the mental health issue was a "LaRouche dirty trick," the charge stuck; it was clear, from Dukakis's behavior, that he was unstable.

That exposé, coupled with the voters' understanding that Dukakis was the reincarnation of the hated Jimmy Carter, and with the Republicans' hammering on his no-defense policies, ensured Dukakis's defeat. Independent Democratic candidate Lyndon LaRouche's nationally televised charge, three days before the election, that Dukakis was a new Mussolini, helped drive the last nail into the Duke's political coffin.

Which way will Bush go?

Throughout the long primary season and the general election period, polls consistently showed that Americans were dissatisfied with both candidates, and were dismayed that neither offered substantive solutions to the range of crises—AIDS, the state of the economy, the Soviet threat—now facing the United States and the world. The responses to LaRouche's election broadcasts on space colonization, the worldwide food crisis, the Soviet threat, and the potential for German reunification showed how hungry the American electorate is for leadership and vision.

Bush's failure to keep the Reagan Democrats (the blue-collar and ethnic voters who abandoned Carter and Mondale

in the last two presidential elections) solidly in his column, testifies to the fact that in the real world, at least, the Reagan Recovery doesn't exist. If Bush cannot deliver a sound economic policy, one which emphasizes real productive growth over speculation on the one hand, and austerity on the other, he can kiss the U.S. economy goodbye, and resign himself to becoming the new Herbert Hoover.

A fight has already broken out in American policymaking circles over the personnel and policies of the new administration; the outcome of this fight will go a long way to determining the fate of the world over the coming months. President-elect Bush's announcement the day after the election that he has chosen James Baker III as his Secretary of State, while not unexpected, was not a particularly auspicious start, given Baker's allegiance to the Harriman wing of the Establishment. Nor are some of the individuals mooted as contenders for top Cabinet posts, e.g., Brent Scowcroft of Kissinger Associates. Although Scowcroft has recently cautioned the West against being seduced by Gorbachov's "reforms" into letting down its guard, he also strongly favors scaling back the SDI, the one military system without which the defense of the West cannot be ensured.

The powerful groupings which hope to steer Bush down the road of accommodating Moscow and foisting the International Monetary Fund's austerity conditions on the U.S. economy, are working to create the political climate in which this can be accomplished.

No sooner were the results in, than the President-elect began to be inundated with rotten advice. Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.) went on national TV within hours after Bush was declared the victor, to discuss what his "good friend" Bush should do: Raise taxes, and listen to the fascist National Economic Commission (NEC), whose co-chairmen are on record calling for deep cuts in defense and entitlement programs, like Social Security.

That advice was echoed by Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.), by the NEC, and by a host of think-tankers and media pundits. The "advice" is rapidly escalating into threats and blackmail. *Washington Post* economics analyst Hobart Rowen warned Bush Nov. 10 that unless Bush heeds the advice of the NEC—which is scheduled to hold a three-day public bash in Washington beginning Nov. 15—he will face a financial blowout. Unless Bush "wants to risk a backlash from financial markets," he will have to accept the NEC's recommendations. Bush "needs the NEC, just as Dukakis would have, to help prepare public opinion for the belt-tightening policy changes that lie ahead." Former Carter administration official C. Fred Bergsten issued a report the same day under the auspices of his Washington think-tank, saying basically the same thing.

Besides the NEC, which is to hand the President-elect a package of recommendations within the next two months, a host of other groups, like the American Agenda, are slated to come out soon with reports along the same austerity lines.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies, home base to several Bush strategic policy advisers, issued a report just a few days before the elections urging the next President not to deploy the SDI, and to begin a partial withdrawal of American troops from Western Europe and South Korea.

Bush: caution on Soviets

But Bush himself is maintaining a very cautious position vis-à-vis the Soviets. In an interview in the Nov. 8 *Le Figaro*, he warned against taking Gorbachov's alleged "reforms" at face value and pouring money into the Soviet economy. "We want to put Gorbachov in a position [where] he'll be forced to make a real choice and to cut defense spending. If we give Gorbachov the money without specifying how he should spend it, we're offering him the chance of ducking that basic question." Asked if the West should help Gorbachov, Bush responded: "It seems to me we don't know enough about the dynamics of the Soviet system to know how to help Gorbachov. Since we're not certain we really understand the mechanism of change under way in the Soviet Union, we should stick to the guiding principle of a cautious foreign policy, give priority to satisfying our own interests."

Then, at his first press conference as President-elect, Bush said he wasn't interested in holding a summit with Gorbachov just for the sake of having a meeting, but only if there were something substantive to discuss.

Two days later, Bush sent another signal to the Kremlin, when he met in Washington with leaders of the Afghan resistance; according to his spokesman, Stephen Hart, the President-elect "reiterated his position that despite the recent Soviet military escalation, he expected the Soviets to honor the Feb. 15, 1989, deadline for total troop withdrawal. And he emphasized that failure to do so would have a negative effect on U.S.-Soviet relations."

Russia has reacted to the Bush victory with some schizophrenia. Radio Moscow is calling it both a vote for more U.S.-Soviet arms-control deals, and a reflection of Americans' support for a strong defense, and the SDI.

Bush's mandate

Even before the final results were in, press pundits began to proclaim that Bush has no real mandate, and to gleefully predict that he will have a tough time dealing with a Congress under solid Democratic control. This is being echoed by many leading Democrats, and some, such as New Jersey Sen. Bill Bradley, are publicly declaring that they won't cooperate with the new President.

Bush can forge his own bipartisan mandate, but to do so, he will have to ignore the advice pouring out of various Establishment think-tanks, and give the kind of national and international leadership that has been lacking for too long. The acute strategic and economic crises demand a break with current policies, and unless Bush is prepared to do this, his presidency will fail.