

Elephants and Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

Bush readies run for reelection

George Bush is gearing up his 1992 reelection campaign apparatus. Bobby Holt, the Texas millionaire who has been a major fundraiser for Bush, is expected to register a Bush-Quayle '92 reelection committee with the Federal Election Commission by sometime in October, and the President himself has embarked on a cross-country tour to tout the alleged accomplishments of his reign.

The flurry of activity coincided with Bush's receiving a clean bill of health from his physicians. Bush, who said earlier this year that only ill health would prevent him from running again, pronounced himself in "perfect health" after a physical examination Sept. 13.

Presidential physician Burton Lee declared that Bush had been "restored to his normal vigorous state of good health," following treatment for hyperthyroidism and a heart condition.

With that medical imprimatur, one of the two big obstacles to Bush's reelection drive has faded. The second, the prospect that the Democrats in Congress might use the occasion of the Robert Gates nomination hearings, and the ongoing investigation into the "October Surprise" scandal, to tie Bush directly to the sordid Iran-Contra affair, has also disappeared, at least for now.

Now, the only thing Bush has to fear is reality, especially the nosediving U.S. economy.

But reality never fazed George in the past, and it certainly doesn't seem to be giving him pause now. He sent out his budget chief Richard Darman to declare on national television Sept. 23 that the "recession" was now officially over—an announcement that no doubt

came as a big surprise to the thousands of failing banks and businesses and the growing ranks of the unemployed and homeless, but was apparently good enough for Bush who, though he may be deemed physically fit, certainly can't be considered sane.

Nevertheless, there seems to be some inkling within the Bush camp that something could go seriously wrong between now and election day.

The Sept. 14 *Washington Post* reported that the Bush campaign plans to spend \$26 million in the primaries alone—even though there's no Republican challenger. Could it be that the President feels it necessary to campaign against any doubts the American electorate might harbor concerning the state of the economy, or the overall direction of U.S. policy under Bush's administration?

Clinton: This is mainstream?

Of course, Bush can count on lots of help from the Democrats. Despite a new gaggle of entrants into the race—Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa and Gov. Douglas Wilder of Virginia both formally declared their candidacies in September, while Bill Clinton, governor of Arkansas, Sen. Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, and Jerry Brown, California's political equivalent of Abbott and Costello, are making tracks in that direction—the party is no closer to backing a feasible alternative to Bush than they were two months ago.

Bill Clinton is a perfect example of what's wrong with the party. As the recently resigned chair of the Democratic Leadership Council, Clinton purports to speak for the moderate wing of the party. Yet, his wife, Hilary, has served as chairman of the board of The New World Foundation, which funds a wide range of "lefty" operations.

According to the foundation's re-

port for 1987 and 1988, recipients of its largesse include the National Lawyers Guild Foundation; the Meadowcreek Project of Arkansas, for a program which "brought Arkansas students and Soviet youth together to study global environment issues, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy technologies"; and the Environmental Policy Institute.

In her foreword, Mrs. Clinton writes: "In operational terms, the foundation has turned increasingly to the support and development of progressive activist organizations."

Meanwhile, two liberal Democratic influentials who backed Jesse Jackson's presidential bid in 1988—Harold Hickey and Anne Wexler—reportedly plan to sign on with Bill Clinton's campaign.

Harkin and the Israeli lobby

Sen. Tom Harkin is striving to present himself as a home-grown populist, in the "raise less corn and more hell" tradition. But since when is acting as a mouthpiece for Israel a characteristic of populism?

Harkin is considered one of the apologists for Israeli policies in the U.S. Senate. And no wonder: Typical of the lengths he'll go to is a statement which he made recently in a discussion with some reporters. Harkin flatly declared that Israeli settlements on the West Bank were not an obstacle to peace. The very idea that they might be problematic "is ridiculous on its face," he said. "The biggest obstacle is the lack of any will on the part of other countries to take off the boycott [of Israel] and sit down and negotiate with Israel."

Maybe this is why Harkin received close to \$250,000 in donations from Zionist Lobby political action committees in his last Senate race.