

LONDON'S HEALTH-CARE DEBACLE

Obama Suffers August Meltdown As U.S. Mass Strike Explodes

by Debra Hanania-Freeman

Aug. 22—President Obama and his family left Washington, D.C. today for a ten-day vacation, ending a week in which his Presidency appeared to crumble under the pressure of an angry popular revolt against his Nazi health-care reform.

Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sibelius set off a firestorm of controversy Aug. 16, when she told CNN's John King that a public health-care option was not "essential" to the Administration's health reform efforts, seemingly signaling a shift away from an earlier "hard line" from Obama, that he would not sign any bill that did not offer a public option. Newspaper headlines and media coverage screamed that the Administration had capitulated to the GOP and Blue Dog Democrats, and dropped the public option.

By the next day, Monday, the left wing of the Democratic Party was in a state of revolt: The leaderships of both the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Black Caucus wrote a letter to Sebelius, countering that "a robust public option is essential," and that no bill lacking it would be passed by the House. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi agreed. Labor leaders threatened to sit out the 2010 election if Congress failed to pass legislation that included a public option. But, on the Senate side, Kent Conrad (D-N.D.) told the press that any bill that *does* include a public option will *not* be passed by the Senate.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs repeatedly

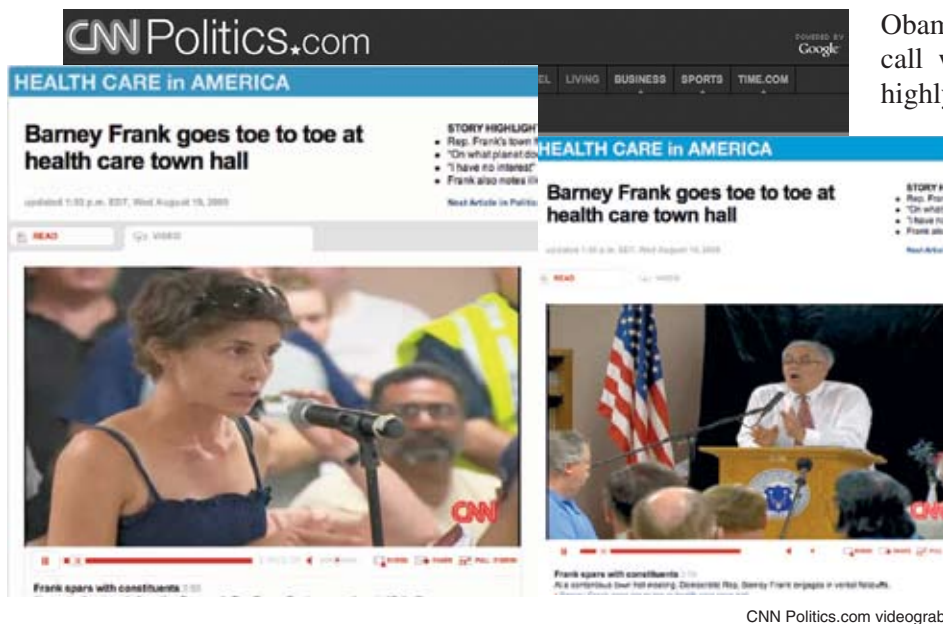
denied that there had been any change in the President's position, but the issue dominated White House press briefings on Monday and Tuesday.

In truth, whether the legislation includes a public option or not is irrelevant. It is still a fascist package. Some members of Congress undoubtedly prefer the charade of "giving everyone health-care coverage." But what good is giving someone an insurance card if you are going to cut the medical treatment they'll receive? The option of a government plan or two plans, with government supplements going to HMOs that agree to carry lower-income enrollees, doesn't change the fact that whole categories of individuals will be denied care, in order to "bend the curve" of rising health-care costs, and keep the system "sustainable." Which is, after all, the intended outcome of the May 11 "breakthrough moment" between Obama and the HMOs, which are all committed to "value" care, not "volume" care.

But, the brawl over the public option signaled the shattering of Obama's so-called coalition of competing and contradictory political groupings, all glued together for the purpose of imposing London's Nazi health-care reform.

Attempt at Damage Control

In an attempt to regain control of the debate, White House strategists scrambled. Obama was already scheduled to participate in a conference call with "lib-



LaRouche PAC organizer Rachel Brown (left) challenged Rep. Barney Frank, at the Congressman's town hall meeting in Dartmouth, Mass. Aug. 21, to explain why he continued to support Obama's Nazi health-care reform, even though it had already been defeated by LaRouche. Frank blew up at her, refusing to discuss it, and the video went viral, appearing all over the world.

eral and progressive faith leaders" on Wednesday. Tuesday night, a separate call, with approximately 1,000 rabbis, was added to the Wednesday schedule. The White House also announced that, the following day, Obama would pitch his plan to conservative talk radio host Michael Smerconish, in a live interview from the White House, before heading over to Democratic National Committee headquarters to participate in an Organizing for America National Health Care Forum (the successor to Obama's campaign organization, now a project of the DNC). Since the previous weeks' "informal town meetings" had failed to shift the momentum in Obama's favor, the new strategy envisioned replacing the town hall meetings with speeches, in which he would talk more about the moral imperative to provide health insurance to all Americans.

On the Wednesday morning call, according to Rabbi Jack Moline, many of the rabbis were startled when Obama said, "We are God's partners in matters of life and death," reminding them that he was quoting from the Rosh Hashanah prayer, which says that, in the holiday period, it is decided "who shall live and who shall die." They wondered how he could have so totally misinterpreted the meaning of the prayer. Apparently, they weren't the only ones who were alarmed. Although

Obama's participation in the afternoon call with religious leaders had been highly publicized for over a week, he made only a very brief appearance and took no questions.

Some speculated that with polls showing that public confidence in Obama's leadership was plummeting, the President was in a flight forward. However, other highly placed sources were convinced that the President's state of mind had more to do with the fact that the videotape of LaRouche organizer Rachel Brown confronting Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) at a town meeting in Dartmouth, Mass. the night before had gone viral, and was the lead item on national news programs and across the Internet (see box).

Obsession with LaRouche

The White House obsession with Lyndon LaRouche is well known inside the beltway. And, although it is true that the obsession goes all the way back to the Democratic primaries, it is no secret that it was LaRouche's intervention, exposing the Nazi nature of the Obama health-care reform initiative, that catalyzed what has become a mass movement, with the LaRouche PAC poster of Obama sporting a Hitler mustache having become its most identifiable symbol. On April 11, when LaRouche, in an international webcast, identified Obama's "Nero Syndrome," many of the nation's leaders, although they didn't necessarily disagree with LaRouche's assessment, still worried that he might have "gone too far." Since then, however, the President's psychological and emotional maladies have become increasingly undeniable.

On Wednesday night, Aug. 19, after a long discussion with Senators Harry Reid (D-Nev.), the Majority Leader, and Max Baucus (D-Mont.), it became clear, even to the sometimes delusional President, that passing a Democratic-only plan might be the only chance the legislation has in the Senate. The problem is that, thanks largely to LaRouche's national mobilization, there are *not* enough Democrats who will vote for the

legislation. Obama was reportedly so distraught that he got off the call before it was over. But, White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel and company made clear that they will move ahead with health-care legislation in the Fall, with or without Republican support (although, by the next day, the White House seemed to soften just enough to leave room for negotiations with Republicans).

After the disastrous discussion with Reid and Baucus, the White House (read David Axelrod and Rahm Emanuel) began floating alternate and, in fact, crazy strategies. One, which was leaked to the press, is to split the legislation into two parts, and pass one bill with budget-related matters (i.e., as part of a “budget reconciliation” measure), and another bill with policy changes, such as insurance market reforms. According to Congressional sources, the Democratic Caucus will discuss this during their weekly call. The argument is that the former could pass with a 51-vote majority, while the latter would still need to clear a 60-vote threshold in the Senate (meaning it is likely to fail), but Obama could still claim “a victory.”

The other strategy, is to go with a bill that includes everything the White House wants, forcing the Republicans to filibuster. The idea is that Reid would force the 60-member Senate Democratic caucus to vote against the filibuster, *but* allow those Democrats opposed to the legislation itself to vote against the final bill. Reid would then take the bill to the floor, knowing he doesn’t have the votes, but giving Obama “a whipping boy” for the defeat of his legislation. However, the strategy would work only if Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.), both of whom are gravely ill, were able to make the cloture vote, and that is highly unlikely.

Wild Ploys Born of Desperation

Rational observers recognized both strategies as nothing more than wild ploys born of desperation. But, by Thursday, Obama had been sufficiently whipped up, that he twice guaranteed that health-care reform would be approved, going much further than he had in the past, in suggesting that he would support moving the bill through the Senate without GOP support. In two separate appearances, Obama declared that health-care reform would become law, despite “hand-wringing” by liberals and the media. He also expressed a willingness to invoke budget reconciliation rules in the Senate that would allow reform to be approved with 51

votes, instead of the 60 necessary to overcome procedural hurdles, stating that using the rules probably would mean Republican support would not be needed in the Senate.

But, despite this public display, Senate Democrats were instructed to try to keep the talks with Republicans going. Sources reported that late-night talks Thursday among key members of the Senate Finance Committee produced no deal, but they also produced no stalemate, ensuring that the negotiations—or at least the *appearance* of negotiations—will continue at least until September. The conference call among Democratic Senators Baucus, Conrad, and Jeff Bingaman (N.M.), and Republicans Chuck Grassley (Iowa), Mike Enzi (Wyo.), and Olympia Snowe (Me.) lasted roughly an hour-and-a-half, and reportedly focused on lowering costs and providing affordable coverage. The Senators directed the staff to “refine ideas to achieve those goals.” That’s about all the detail the Finance Committee offered, in a statement issued shortly before midnight, and Baucus said the negotiators vowed to produce a bipartisan bill.

On Aug. 21, the *Washington Post* reported that “Senate health-care negotiators agreed late Thursday to ignore the increasingly strident rhetoric from Republican and Democratic leaders and to keep working toward a bill that can win broad support from the rank-and-file in both parties, according to sources familiar with the talks. In a conference call, the three Democratic and three Republican members of the Senate Finance Committee agreed to redouble their efforts to craft a less costly alternative to the trillion-dollar initiatives so far put forward in Congress. They discussed the possibility of also reining in the scope of their package, the sources said. The senators rejected the idea of imposing a deadline on their negotiations, and they agreed to talk again Sept. 4—four days before lawmakers are scheduled to return to Washington from their August break. The consensus, one participant said, was ‘to take your time to get it right.’”

Get Thee to the Vineyard

On Friday, former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, the man who was originally supposed to shepherd health-care reform through the Congress, as Obama’s first choice to head HHS, was brought in, to “talk the President down.” Daschle reportedly advised Obama to “go on vacation, get off the airwaves and get your people off the airwaves,” to lower the tempera-

ture of the debate and give Senate negotiators more time to craft a mutually satisfactory deal. “A little radio silence wouldn’t hurt,” said a source, who is involved in health-care lobbying and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

It might sound like the most reasonable strategy presented thus far, except for the fact that it won’t work. With or without comment from the White House, Congressional town hall meetings, heavily attended by increasingly angry and distrustful citizens, show no sign of abating, and are expected to continue right up to the reconvening of Congress immediately after Labor Day.

Additionally, the escalating financial crisis, as the end of the fiscal year approaches, is likely to cause very radical changes in everyone’s agenda. Notably, on Friday, even as Fed chairman Ben Bernanke lied to an audience in Jackson Hole, Wyo., on the “stabilization”

of the economy, four U.S. banks failed. The period between now and Labor Day will undoubtedly contain a lot more of the same, and there is simply no way Obama will be able to hide. The crisis will force him to respond. And, there is little doubt that the full effect of what LaRouche has identified as a mass strike, has not yet fully registered.

In the end, the idea that this President can hide at Martha’s Vineyard for a couple of weeks, let the furor “die down,” and then come back to Washington and start fresh, is as much a fantasy as the hare-brained schemes being churned out by the likes of Axelrod and Emanuel. The reality is that the crises will intensify, confidence in this Administration will continue to crash, and when the business resumes in Washington on Sept. 8, the first order of business will be the agenda LaRouche lays out in his webcast scheduled for that day.

LPAC Organizer Confronts Rep. Frank at Town Meeting

This exchange took place at a town hall meeting in Dartmouth, Mass., Aug. 18, when Rachel Brown of the LaRouche Political Action Committee confronted Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) on his support for the Obama Nazi health plan. While this incident was widely covered in the international press, the main part of Brown’s statement was censored. Here is the full transcript.

Rachel Brown: I think the Administration is missing something in these town hall meetings, which is, that it’s not just one group. The economy is collapsing. We have 30% real unemployment. Forty-eight states cannot balance their budgets and they are cutting programs to the bone. This is the context under which the Obama Administration says we need health-care reform—

Barney Frank: Well, I’ll tell ya—

Brown: I’m not done. The reason why, is because they say we need to limit Medicare expenditures in order to do that, in order to reduce the deficit. That’s the origin of this policy. This is the T4 policy, the Hitler policy in 1939, when he said certain lives

are not worth living; certain people, we should not spend the money to keep them alive. Which is exactly what Ezekiel Emanuel has said.

So, my question to you is, one, since this policy is already on its way out—it already has been defeated by LaRouche—my question to you is: Why do you continue to support a Nazi policy, as Obama has expressly supported this policy? Why are you supporting it?

Frank: When you ask me that question, I am going to revert to my ethnic heritage, and answer your question with a question: On what planet do you spend most of your time?

Brown: [Inaudible; apparently asks Frank to answer the question.]

Frank: You want me to answer the question? [visibly and audibly enraged; lisp more pronounced:] Yes, you stand there with a picture of the President defaced to look like Hitler, and compare the effort to increase health care to the Nazis. My answer to you is, as I said before: It is a tribute to the First Amendment, that this kind of vile, contemptible nonsense is so freely propagated.

Brown: [Inaudible.]

Frank: Ma’am, trying to have a conversation with you would be like trying to have a conversation with a dining room table. I have no interest in doing it.