

Leader Trent Lott (Miss.), a “former” member of the Southern racist Citizens Council, and extending to the Texas-based energy cartels—and arrogantly pushed aside any opposition. It should not be surprising, therefore, that, when Jeffords announced his resignation from the Bush-led Republican Party, the move was widely reported as the result of the backfire of the Southern Strategy run amok.

And while the Yahoo base of the Bush Administration is certainly screaming about their loss of the Senate, its fervor for the Bush Administration is somewhat constrained as well, in the face of the blatantly Bush-backed energy ripoff.

It would be a mistake to see the resistance to Bush as purely domestic, however. Longtime allies of the United States within the Western European elites, have been visibly unnerved by the take-no-prisoners blundering of the administration. They have had two reactions: first, to move more openly around establishing new partnerships with the nations of Eurasia; and second, to discreetly collaborate with their counterparts in the United States. Editorial comment from certain British press outlets, in sharp disappointment with young Bush, is very notable in this regard.

In effect, the process which LaRouche called for in the early days of the Bush Administration has now been put into effect. The Bush myth of absolute power is gone, defeated in large part by the operations which LaRouche has set into motion. The beast is still dangerous, and the road will be rocky, but the path is open for the imposition of sane policies, LaRouche’s global and domestic policies, in the weeks and months ahead.

Jeffords’s Switch Means New Policy Dynamic in Senate

by Carl Osgood

When Sen. James Jeffords (I-Vt.) announced, on May 24, that he would be leaving the Republican Party to become an independent, he made it very clear that his departure was over issues of policy and outlook. “Looking ahead,” he said, “I can see more and more instances where I will disagree with the President on very fundamental issues—the issues of choice, the direction of the judiciary, tax and spending decisions, missile defense, energy, and the environment.” Jeffords said that the biggest issue for him was education. Whereas the Republican Party once stood for opening the doors of public education for all, he said, “Now, for some,

success seems to be measured by the number of students moved out of public schools.”

Indeed, it seems that it was the education issue that drove Jeffords over the edge. Jeffords told reporters on May 22 after a meeting with President George W. Bush at the White House, “I told him that I firmly believe he would be a one-term President.” His comments apparently came in reference to the Bush Administration’s education proposal, which the Senate has been debating on and off for the last two weeks.

The policy issues which Jeffords enumerated, are the issues which the Democrats intend to take the lead on, once they assume formal control of the Senate on June 5. The transition to majority status means that the Democrats will control the legislative agenda and, therefore, not only be able to bring their legislative priorities to the Senate floor, they’ll also be able to significantly disrupt the policy agenda of the Bush White House.

On the organizational front, Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) will become Majority Leader, all the committee chairmanships will be taken over by Democrats, and the Democrats will gain a one-vote majority on every committee. Some of the more significant committee shifts include the following: Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), a strong critic of the disastrous 1996 “Freedom to Farm” Act, will take over the Agriculture Committee. Robert F. Byrd (D-W.V.), the dean of the Democratic Caucus, will become chairman of the Appropriations Committee. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), a critic of Bush’s missile defense proposals, will take over the Armed Services Committee. Levin will also head up the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee (SPIS), and as such, has already announced that he will be investigating the huge reported profits of the oil industry and their relationship to high gasoline prices. Also on the energy front, Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) will chair the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which will now be taking up legislation on electricity price caps. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) will take over the Foreign Relations Committee from the mercurial Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), and Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) will become head of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. Kennedy has announced that he will be moving patients’ rights legislation and an increase in the minimum wage as soon as possible.

Most significant of all, perhaps, is the shift in the Judiciary Committee, which will be taken over by Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.). Leahy has indicated that his Innocence Protection Act, which is intended to reduce the danger of wrongful execution in capital cases, will be a major item on his agenda. Even more important, however, is that the Democrats will now be vetting Bush’s judicial nominees. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), a member of the committee, warned, a few hours after Jeffords’s announcement, that “we will not have nominations of right-wing after right-wing after right-wing judges. Judges will have to be moderate.” One rumored

nomination has already been pulled as a result of this change-over, that of Rep. Chris Cox (R-Calif.) for a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals in California. Cox's nomination was opposed by both of California's Senators, Barbara Boxer (D) and Dianne Feinstein (D), making it very unlikely, with Democrats in control of the committee, that the nomination would ever go through.

Jeffords, since he will be voting with the Democrats on organization matters, was given the chairmanship of the Environment and Public Works Committee. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), the assistant Democratic Leader, who was also the ranking member on that committee, denied that giving Jeffords that chairmanship was a "deal maker." During an interview on Fox News Sunday on May 27, Reid said that the GOP had offered Jeffords "everything but the kitchen sink," and Jeffords had refused. Reid said that there never was any discussion of a chairmanship for Jeffords until the day after he announced his switch. "There never was any question," he said, "that this was something that had been bothering Jim for a long, long time."

Beginning of the End for the GOP?

For Republicans, their problems are not over. While a challenge to soon-to-be Minority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) has yet to emerge, there is clearly an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with his leadership. Don Nickles (Okla.), the assistant Republican leader, admitted frankly that the members of the GOP caucus are "shell shocked" by Jeffords's departure, an admission that they weren't expecting Jeffords to leave. Much more blunt was John McCain (R-Ariz.), who, in a May 24 statement, attacked the "short-sighted party operatives," and some Republican members of Congress, who "unfairly targetted" Jeffords "for abuse." "Tolerance of dissent," McCain said, "is the hallmark of a mature party, and it is well past time for the Republican Party to grow up." McCain was echoed by Susan Collins (R-Me.), who warned, in an interview with the *Washington Post*, that the Republican Party risks becoming a regional party (of the Southern states), and a regional party "has difficulty winning a national election."

While Lott is putting a strong face forward, rumors are wildly circulating through the press of further possible defections. These rumors revolve around McCain and Lincoln Chaffee (R-R.I.). According to these rumors, McCain has been holding talks with Kennedy and John Edwards (D-N.C.), with whom he is co-sponsoring a Patients' Bill of Rights bill, about changing his party affiliation. Chaffee's unease with the GOP is clearly indicated by his lack of enthusiasm for Bush's budget and tax agenda, which he has been voting against. When these rumors are taken together with continuing questions about the health of Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), the GOP would appear to have no where to go, but downhill.

Congress Showdown Looms over D.C. General

by Paul Gallagher and Edward Spannaus

At the end of May, the national mobilization led by Lyndon LaRouche's movement had brought Congress to the brink of intervening to reopen Washington's D.C. General Hospital; that Congress actually do so, is an "indispensible victory" to be won for the principle of the general welfare of the whole nation. This mobilization, as Capitol Hill sources have told its leaders, is unprecedented in their experience, as a sustained, broadly based lobbying effort from all over the nation, from ordinary citizens to elected leaders in the states.

As a result, the top Democratic leaders in Congress have now called for saving D.C. General. On May 28 and 29, House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (Mo.), and soon-to-be Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (S.D.) told public audiences that they are committed to saving D.C. General. House Democratic Whip David Bonior (Mich.) has already issued a statement. Daschle, in addition, signed the national support statement, "It's Time to Draw the Line," of the Coalition to Save D.C. General, at an appearance in his home state. In that same week, the statement was signed by California Congresswomen Loretta Sanchez and Grace Napolitano, bringing to seven the number of U.S. Representatives and Senators who had signed the statement or made public pledges to restore the capital's only public hospital.

The hospital was forcibly privatized on April 30 and is being dismantled by an "emergency" *fiat* of the unelected D.C. Financial Control Board, over the unanimous opposition of the elected City Council, and at the cost of at least seven or eight unnecessary deaths in the month of May. The closing of D.C. General's emergency room to ambulances has spread chaos throughout the city's hospitals.

What is now urgently required, by mid-June, is the passage of a Congressional joint resolution, rejecting the Control Board's privatization measures, and approving instead the City Council's supplemental budget which will keep D.C. General fully operating. The issue of D.C. General, and the need to override the Control Board's action—in which it exceeded its own Congressionally granted authority—is now under widespread discussion among Democrats and moderate Republicans in Congress, but what is required is for a couple of members of Congress to step forward and introduce a joint resolution to reinstate D.C. General as a full-service public hospital.

This has been called, by Coalition leader Dr. Abdul Alim