

EDITORIAL



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MY CANDIDATE

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

It is not always the gaudy show under the klieg lights that directs the destiny of a nation. Thucydides, Tacitus, Henry Steele Commager—all the greats of the historical sciences will tell you that events seen in their time as matters of small moment often change the lives of nations and civilizations. It is my view that the snickered-upon withdrawal from the Presidential race of the Hon. Larry Pressler—1962 recipient of the National 4-H Citizenship Award, Rhodes Scholar, U.S. Senator, author of press releases, and prophet of gasohol—could prove to be such an event.

The sages of the press corps laughed when Senator Pressler declared his candidacy, and they laughed again when he made his dignified retreat. Let them laugh; in some far-off time, in some quiet, book-lined *atelier*, a forlorn Gibbon will weep.

Let me assure you that the Iranians did not think Senator Pressler's candidacy very funny. "A gasohol still in every yard and farm," the prophet from Humboldt declaimed with his customary yelp, and the tumescent and pulsating Middle East shriveled to a more modest significance. Nor did the senior citizens in the Kremlin laugh when this unscotchable kid stepped forward. For that matter, Mrs. Antone Pressler was not laughing either. Mrs. Pressler is Senator Pressler's mother; and, if the *New York Times* is to be believed, Mrs. Pressler's role in past campaigns has been to write contributors "a painstakingly written long-hand thank-you note." A successful Presidential bid by her unusual son could have killed her.

How I would like to have seen Senator Pressler make it to the White

House. Not that I harbor any malice for his mother, but the Presidential presence of this gigantic *reductio ad absurdum* of the modern pol would quite possibly have had a more salutary influence on the American polity than a *coup d'état* led by the ghosts of Lincoln, Madison, and Grover Cleveland.

Look around Washington. Cock your ear to the baby talk emitting from every source of eminence and power. We live under a tyranny of *Homo sapiens* who are...well, who are incomplete as specimens of mankind go. The sleazy majority of pols practicing their black arts in the Great Republic have risen to prominence by saying things that are palpably untrue. Now as time rushes along, and the American condition worsens, it is becoming increasingly apparent that most of these effortless honey-foglers simply have no idea that there exists such a thing as truth. Does reckless abandon in economic

management, military preparedness, diplomacy, social welfare, and all the other realms of governance ever eventuate in Weimar and ruin? The pols apparently do not think so. Inflation, lawlessness, rising chaos—all such phenomena are, for our pols, the Mysteries of modern times. They respond to them with oratory and policy gestures that amount to little more than ceremony.

So irresponsible and extravagant has been the dance of American policy in recent years that today the Great Republic is viewed with amazement and alarm by its friends. Its enemies merely play with it, and its enemies are not thought of as playful fellows. The Rt. Rev. Khomeini and his galoots exploit our weird hysteria over race, creed, and sex, treating women and black hostages as fellow Third World heroes while treating men hostages as criminals. One wonders, had there been homosexual activists working in the American

Embassy, would the Holy Man's agents have freed them too?

Papa Brezhnev, his armies swarming all over Afghanistan's bourgeois hordes, puckishly declares that the world sees the United States "as an absolutely unreliable partner in interstate ties, as a state whose leadership, prompted by some whim, caprice, or emotional outburst...is capable at any moment of cancelling treaties and agreements signed by it." There is a neoconservative salvo against latter-day McGovernism for you. But that it came from Papa Brezhnev, in pursuit of whose favor so many of those obligations and treaties were violated, is a cruel twist.

Washington's sages now tell us that the Wonderboy will be invincible in 1980. He has botched so many things that the American people in their fathomless generosity will reelect him out of sympathy for his suffering. The analysis is unusual, but I am in no position to doubt.

Yet if Americans are about to elect a man President because he is pathetic, I say the time is ripe for Senator Pressler to throw his hat back into the ring. And just to insure that his campaign is more pathetic than that of our President I suggest he choose the Hon. Howard Baker as running mate. If a Pressler-Baker ticket is not pathetic enough, how about declaring the Hon. George Hansen as Secretary of State? How about throwing in the Hon. Charles C. Diggs, Jr., as Attorney General?

The possibilities are endless. President Pressler could choose a dozen cabinets and enough Supreme Court candidates for a century just by picking his Capitol Hill colleagues. For, truth to tell, Senator Pressler is not all that different from many of the other Solons and Numas who have contrived to govern us. □



Adapted from RET's Monday Column in the Washington Post.

DEFEND AMERICA NOW

by The Editors

No one today outside the Kremlin—and possibly not there either—knows where Soviet forces will strike next. An attack on Pakistan, in alleged support of an oppressed separatist minority, is one possibility. Intervention in Yugoslavia, by invitation of pro-Moscow elements in the aftermath of President Tito's death, is another. Most menacing of all, an invasion of Iran upon the slightest hint of U.S. military action against the crumbling, lunatic regime of Ayatollah Khomeini is a virtual certainty. And let us not forget that Soviet troops are within striking range of the Iranian oil fields.

Any one of these Soviet moves would constitute a devastating blow to Western security interests, leaving us no reasonable option but to go to war. And that is precisely what we are presently incapable of doing with any hope of success, including an all-out nuclear exchange, which would be a far greater catastrophe to the United States than to the Soviet Union, given the USSR's much wider dispersion of population and production facilities and its incomparable civil defense system.

The fact of the matter is that two decades of progressively lower military expenditures by this country in the interest of a "reordering of priorities" has left us with a defense establishment unable to defend our vital security anywhere outside the Western hemisphere. Add to this a demonstration (in Moscow's eyes) of pusillanimity on the part of our present leaders unmatched by anything since Munich, and it must be clear to the Russians that the time to throw down the gauntlet is *now*, before an alarmed West can bring its heavy economic superiority to bear in a redressing of the military balance.

It is clear that Moscow is positioning itself, militarily and politically, to do just that.

Can anything be done to prevent it? As a practical matter, once the gauntlet is thrown we are lost. We cannot win a war any time this year against the Soviet Union. We must either bow politically or go down in ruins militarily. That is the legacy of two decades of—for all practical purposes—unilateral disarmament.

Our only hope today lies in deterrence. Not in the fatuous academics' doctrine of nuclear deterrence that Robert McNamara bequeathed to us, but in a demonstration of renewed

will so immediate, so unambiguous, and so massive as to persuade Soviet leaders that the cost to them of military victory would be higher than they care to pay.

For it is reasonable to assume that the Russians are almost as eager to avoid all-out nuclear war as we. Though they would undoubtedly sustain a lower level of destruction in such a war, that is still only a comparative measure; the lowest conceivable amount of damage they would surely suffer would set their society back by decades.

What then motivates them to offer us the sort of challenge that might impel us to resort to nuclear war? It is their present confidence that the United States would not risk annihilation for the sake of Pakistan or Yugoslavia or Iran—or, for that matter, Western Europe. And that confidence could be shaken if, and only if, the United States moves at once to a

program of rearmament unprecedented in our post-Korean history.

First, we must reinstitute the draft—and this time on a no-exemption basis. Only the severely handicapped among our young men should be excused from military training. The scandal of college deferments must never be repeated in a democratic society.

Second, the President must demand of Congress a supplemental appropriation to the FY 1980 budget large enough to allow us to procure all the matériel that can be produced and all the personnel that can be trained on a crash basis. The services today are desperately undersupplied in virtually every category of their weapons inventory, from tanks and naval vessels down to artillery and rifle ammunition. According to one authoritative report, U.S. forces in

Europe have only enough ammunition for 36 hours of combat. If that is true it must rank as the worst scandal in American military history. To properly equip our forces, we should increase our defense spending to 6 percent of the GNP (we now spend under 5 percent, while the Soviets spend over 12), which would provide approximately 22 billion dollars more for defense in FY 1981 than the amount proposed in the President's new budget.

Third, the administration must restore and accelerate development of new strategic weapons systems—the B-1 bomber, the neutron bomb, air- and sea-launched cruise missiles, and the MX intercontinental missile.

Fourth, the bill for this massive rearmament program must be paid through new taxes, not deficit financing. An income tax surcharge of, say, 10 percent would yield something on the order of 16 billion dollars in the remaining eight months of this fiscal year. A demonstration of willingness on the part of the American people to pay the price of national security will impress Soviet analysts as nothing else can that this is truly a national determination.

Fifth, the President must clean house in his own administration. Not only every one of the swarm of McGovernites who currently infest the State and Defense Departments and National Security Council must be dismissed, but also such top policy makers as State's chief Soviet "expert," Marshall Shulman, still mouthing the witless Henry Wallace platitudes of 1948, and Secretary Vance as well, who, for all his basic decency and patriotism, has never understood the implacable nature of our Russian adversaries.

Sixth, the ABM treaty must be abrogated. As matters now stand, we will have to wait until 1989 for the security then promised by Carter's Rube Goldberg-basing of the MX missile. ABMs promise cheaper and earlier security.

Once these steps are taken President Carter should declare—and will have a chance to be believed—not only that we are committed to the defense of areas vital to our security but that we will not accept a defeat by conventional arms. For it is only when the Soviet leadership comes

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SPECIAL EDITORIAL

