

Will Iowa's 'uncommitted' defeat Carter again?

by Konstantine George

A special and politically decisive upset is in the making for the Jan. 21 Iowa precinct caucuses. That evening we may well witness the largest number of votes from Iowa Democratic activists going to neither Carter, Kennedy, nor Brown. Instead, out of widespread negative sentiment over key issues and the lack of moral qualifications for the office of President displayed by the three Democratic contenders in the Iowa contest, the winner may be the uncommitted vote.

Iowa State Democratic Committee sources contacted 10 days before the Jan. 21 caucuses estimate that the percentage of uncommitted delegates from the Iowa caucus going to the National Democratic convention in New York City in July "could be as high as 30-35 percent ... this is because of the tremendous disaffection of the average party member with Carter, Kennedy, or Brown."

This Iowa state party estimation was released to the major media, according to State Committee sources. But to avoid the "Emperor's New Clothes" problem for Carter, such news stories, to date, have been put on ice by the national networks.

Iowa has a tradition of turning out a large uncommitted vote. One of the myths of the 1976 presidential election campaign was that Carter "won" in Iowa. In actual fact, Carter was No. 2. The uncommitted vote won.

The Iowa uncommitted sentiment has been conceded across the board by state spokesmen for the Carter and

Kennedy campaigns. Here is what those in the know inside the state are saying:

Iowa Democratic Party Executive Director, John Lawe. "I was looking for 20-25 percent uncommitted, but now I wouldn't be surprised by 30 percent."

Carter Iowa coordinator, Bill Romjue. "I see a slight recent increase in the undecided vote ... the grain embargo is a factor."

Romjue said this on Jan. 14, clearly understating the case, as subsequent events demonstrate. On Jan. 16, it was reported by the *Boston Globe*—which didn't mention "uncommitted vote" once—that Romjue is de facto out as Carter's coordinator. The *Globe* article was headlined "Carter Organization In Iowa In Disarray." Tim Kraft from the Carter-Mondale national headquarters was dispatched with a team of 30 into Iowa to attempt a last minute shore up of the shaky Carter campaign.

That was not the only White House move touched off by the alarm bells that rang as the news of the uncommitted surge poured in. Vice President Walter Mondale's schedule was hastily rearranged to send him out to Iowa posthaste. Mondale is now hopping from the home of one Iowa Democratic County Chairman to another, seeking, by all means available, to keep wobbly Carterites in the fold, and preempt the developing Jan. 21 upset.

Three out of four farm district Iowa Democratic County Chairmen surveyed by *EIR* who are supporting

Carter, were quite candid as to why: "Only because Kennedy and Brown are so rotten ... if there was someone else ..."

The national pattern

The Iowa picture coheres with soundings taken around the country which reveal that Carter's standing among Democrats is plummeting, with no rebound in sight for the tattered campaign of Senator Edward Kennedy. The current leader in the Democratic nomination race nationally, too, is marked 'uncommitted.'

A just-released poll in North Carolina shows that 48.8 percent of all Democratic voters in that state are uncommitted. Carter stands second at 47.8 percent, while Kennedy stands dismissed as a factor with a dismal 3.4 percent. The North Carolina results are typical for the South as a whole. Extensive informal canvassing of Democratic county and town level officials and party leaders in Alabama, Florida and Georgia reveals that a majority of Dems are considering rejecting both the Carter and Kennedy options, and going uncommitted to the party's Aug. 11 nominating convention in New York.

The process has been working in the following manner. So long as Southern Dems believed Kennedy to be seriously threatening to capture the nomination, they rallied around Carter as the perceived, slightly lesser of two evils. Now the collapse of the Kennedy campaign has removed the basis for Carter's bloc of support in the South.

There are no regional exceptions to the process now underway. After Iowa, the next Democratic caucus, preceding the Feb. 26 New Hampshire primary, is the Feb. 10 Maine caucus. State Democratic Committee estimates in Maine are similar to the Iowa findings. Sources contacted at the committee estimate a "turnout of 7-10,000 people at the caucuses, of whom about 30 percent are expected to vote uncommitted."

In New Hampshire itself, where the ballot for the Feb. 26 contest does not feature Brown, the pattern is continued in a slightly different fashion. A "favorite son" candidate with national aspirations and support, Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., has campaigned extensively, garnered numerous high-level party endorsements, and appears on his way to a very significant percentage of the vote come the time of the actual polling. LaRouche's position appears good enough at this point that spokesmen for his campaign organization—without exaggerating the candidate's prospects—can credibly set their sights on an actual victory for LaRouche in the New Hampshire primary. Needless to say, from LaRouche's standpoint, the "uncommitted" trend nationally is viewed so gnawing a potential for voter-support nationally, and the related prospect of an open convention the ideal condition for his determined, dark-horse candidacy to become a major factor.

Meanwhile, from Carter or Kennedy's standpoint, LaRouche's strength in New Hampshire only confirms the national "uncommitted" pattern, and makes it all the more perplexing. The Democratic National Committee, chaired by John White, a political protégé of Robert Strauss, the former DNC Chairman and current head of the Carter-Mondale reelection committee, is extremely upset over the vastness of uncommitted sentiment. Members have been working overtime to "contain" the uncommitted movement. DNC sources readily admit that the DNC has gone to extraordinary lengths to attempt to prevent uncommitted delegate slates from forming in many states. One DNC member close to Strauss stated: "The Carter people forced through a DNC ruling that an uncommitted slate, to get on a ballot in a given state, has to get as many signatures as any committed slate of a Presidential candidate would require. ... We were worried about this at the time, but no more."

The DNCer in question underestimates the depth of anti-Carter and anti-Kennedy sentiment in the Party. That sentiment is so widespread that even David Broder of the *Washington Post* was forced to concede, in a column this past week entitled "Disaffected Dems," that the largest category of Dems is those who reject Carter, Kennedy, and Brown, and are searching for "another option." Until Democrats settle on a specific candidate alternative, the negative sentiment directed at both Carter and Kennedy will continue to propel forward the uncommitted option.

One respected party member summed it up, "Carter or Kennedy spell defeat for the Party in 1980. We need a winner. If enough people go to New York uncommitted, then maybe we can all put our heads together and pick that winner."

'The uncommitted will be the big story...'

Interviews this week with Democratic Party spokesmen from growth of the uncommitted movement at the state level. A spokesman for the Iowa Democratic Party said:

We have our caucuses on Jan. 21 and I can tell you that the big story will be the size of the uncommitted vote. I'd say that it will be higher than 30 percent, maybe higher than 35 percent. It's possible that Mr. Uncommitted will come in first in the voting and pick up the most delegates.

Everybody remembers that Jimmy Carter did well in

the 1976 Iowa caucus and that it gave his campaign a big boost. Most people think he came in first, but that's not quite correct. Jimmy Carter finished second to Mr. Uncommitted.

This time around people are trying to squash an uncommitted vote. People at the Democratic National Committee are telling people to go one way or another, or at least were telling people that around here. But I can tell you that no matter what the DNC says, no matter what Carter says, or Kennedy says, people are going to vote uncommitted.

A few weeks ago, I gave this story to someone at the *Los Angeles Times* and they ignored it. Now as the caucuses approach, people are going to have to cover it so they won't look stupid when the votes are counted.

What do I attribute the uncommitted vote to? Well, I think that many Iowans just don't trust any of the candidates. Kennedy is in trouble, but that doesn't mean that Carter is doing well. Brown isn't really a factor. There is little enthusiasm for anyone and this means votes for Mr. Uncommitted. It could be a real shocker. And it's not that much of an organized movement, so you can't make predictions. Who knows, the way things are going it could go even higher than 35 percent.

'Most think both Carter and Kennedy are losers...'

A spokesperson for the Maine Democratic Party, which holds its caucus on Feb. 10 stated:

Uncommitted? That's going to be a pretty sizeable vote. I'm not much for giving percentages, but it's well over a quarter. It could be much more. I was at a pre-caucus meeting the other night and they took a straw poll. I don't say that these things are all that accurate, but more than half the people voted uncommitted. That will change some by Feb. 10, but not all that much.

Carter's and Kennedy's people are quite upset by it. It means that voters here in Maine don't really care all that much for either candidate. We are right next door to New Hampshire and this could have an effect on the vote there.

It makes the caucus more interesting and I'm sure it's going to mean that Carter and Kennedy will be sending in more troops. Maybe I shouldn't say this, but I think a lot of people think that both Carter and Kennedy are losers. The problem is that they don't see anyone else who has a chance for the nomination. Brown doesn't come across very well here. I really don't know what this means for the convention.

'The best and brightest'

A secret meeting

by Barbara Dreyfuss

A top secret breakfast meeting was held last Wednesday, Jan. 9 at the White House. Over 40 leaders of the Anglo-American establishment gathered to plot out the response of the United States to the Iran crisis and the Soviet Union's move into Afghanistan. Three eyewitnesses to the meeting, not reported in any of the U.S. media, revealed that one after another participant stood up to denounce Soviet activities in Afghanistan and demand that President Carter take tough measures to confront Moscow. After several hours of teeth gnashing, the "Carter Doctrine" was born.

A top figure at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies divulged that it is now a matter of days before the final decision will be made on whether the new "Carter Doctrine" will be merely a "statement of intent—have Carter get on television and say something bellicose"—or actually include military actions such as "seizing Kharg Island in the Persian Gulf or mining the Gulf."

Notably absent from the discussions was any sense of strategic reality: Why did the Soviets move into Afghanistan? There was no mention that the Carter administration, through the visit of Defense Secretary Harold Brown to China, has committed the United States to a strategic alliance with Communist China directed against the Soviet Union. Equally absent was any sense of fundamental military reality. The participants urged a confrontation over Afghanistan—whose affairs have no bearing on U.S. national security. The participants, after all, were among the same liberal "best and the brightest" crew—Rostow, Fowler, Schlesinger, etc.—whose policies since the '50s have systematically undercut America's industrial-military capability.

Should the U.S. now enter a strategic confrontation with the Soviet Union, assuming no war by miscalculation, the guaranteed outcome is the humiliation of the U.S.—a complete strategic debacle. This is the context in which to view the statements and "recommendations" of those present, and the susceptibility to this madness of a