

Eye on Democrats by Anita Gallagher

Whose side are they on, anyway?

It may look like the eight "Moscow Democrats" running for the party's presidential nomination are playing partisan politics again, but the latest attacks on President Reagan betokens something worse.

Timed almost to the hour with the attacks by Syrian artillery on U.S. reconnaissance planes in Lebanon, all the candidates except LaRouche issued verbal blasts against the U.S. military presence in Lebanon, and, except for Walter Mondale, denounced the U.S. for not abandoning Lebanon to the Syrians.

Since September, George McGovern has called for bringing the Marines home. He declared on Dec. 4: "Step by step, the United States is approaching war with Syria." President Reagan "has virtually consigned our marines as hostages of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Those who have survived should be brought home immediately."

Also on Dec. 4, California Sen. Alan Cranston said that President Reagan's "trigger-happy and reckless approach to foreign policy has landed us in more wars at once." Spelling out his appeasement views, Cranston noted that there is a "U.S. Soviet equation" in the Middle East and therefore, "We should not be in places where we invite attack."

Senator Gary Hart (D-Colo.) Dec. 4: "It's almost inevitable that there will be an escalation of the conflict the longer we remain on Lebanese soil. . . . I'm concerned that the administration will increase the level of hostilities, particularly with the Syrians."

Within hours of the downing of the U.S. planes, Jesse Jackson was on television Dec. 4 with a plea to appease the Soviets. "It is very clear to me that our presence in Lebanon can only serve no good end. This apparent escalation of tensions in the Middle East, a kind of declaration of war, is unwarranted. It is provocative. . . . We simply, unless we intend to go much deeper into Lebanon militarily, should get out as quickly as we possible can, before we find ourselves in a quagmire and cannot get out."

Gov. Reubin Askew of Florida had a statement Dec. 5: "We are caught in a continuing civil war and we are perceived as taking sides in that civil war, without any hope that the presence of our troops will play any constructive role in this conflict." The United States must replace its troops with U.N. troops, says Askew, "otherwise, we may drift into an all-out war with the Syrians—and perhaps with the Soviets as well."

Dodging the issue of the Soviets

Both Glenn and Mondale implied that the Lebanese situation is the result of mishandling by the administration, rather than one of a series of escalations in the Soviet global showdown gameplan.

Glenn was characteristically self-righteous: "I have warned against allowing the situation in Lebanon to deteriorate into a direct Syrian-American confrontation. I have called for clearly defining our mission. If the administration considers a large protracted battle with the Syrians in Lebanon an option, let them present their plan to the Congress and the American people."

The KGB-preferred Mondale, playing the role of the cautious front-runner, passed on a statement Dec. 4, then admitted on Dec. 5 that "as long as our troops are in Lebanon, we must

respond to unprovoked attacks. But retaliation is not a substitute for a policy to ensure our forces will not be deployed in Lebanon indefinitely. The Reagan administration has no plans except the status quo. . . ." Mondale would pressure besieged Lebanese President Gemayel for a timetable for removal of U.S. ground forces. Says Mondale: "I would undertake an all-out effort to pressure the Syrians."

And just who does he think is running the Syrians?

For Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., the only Democratic presidential candidate warning of the Soviet intention for a global showdown, the Moscow-allied Syrians' escalation in Lebanon is part of that larger strategic picture. In a campaign statement issued at the end of November, LaRouche said: "During mid-April of this year, I estimated and reported that the Soviet government was committed to a global thermonuclear confrontation during the early period ahead. I reported my estimate that the countdown toward this confrontation would probably begin during August of this year, and build up to placing the mainland United States under threat of Soviet thermonuclear attack by as early as December 1983. . . ."

"The Soviet government is committed to an early thermonuclear confrontation with the United States, with the purpose of risking war in the expectation that the United States will back down, and in backing down will provide Moscow such extensive concessions that Soviet military superiority will be unchallengeable for the decades ahead."

LaRouche says, "My goal is to persuade the President to implement a war-emergency powers order now, to place our security forces on full alert status, and to launch a 1939-43 economic mobilization of our nation. These measures are necessary to persuade the maddened Soviet leadership that a nuclear confrontation with the United States is unwise at this time."