

The 1988 presidential race will be determined this year

by Stephen Pepper

Lyndon LaRouche, speaking to an end-of-year meeting of candidates in the 1986 congressional elections, told them that his campaign for the Democratic nomination for President in 1988 would be heated up immediately to fill the political vacuum that now exists in American politics.

"My campaign will move in on this situation very fast," he told the more than 100 candidates gathered from around the country. "Bush's candidacy will not have the presidency for a stepping stone, and Kennedy's announcement means that the Democratic Party will be wide open."

LaRouche has already declared that 1986 will be the year of decision for our nation and for the human race. The passage of the Gramm-Rudman budget-balancing amendment is a turning point in a decisive downward turn for our constitutional form of government. The application of the strict budget-cutting requirements will blow apart the infrastructure of federal, state, county, and municipal government in the country. As a consequence, the ad hoc political alliances that keep things running in normal times in this country will come apart. In these circumstances, the American people will have to grasp a new political method, one that restores the morality necessary to achieve progress, or this nation will not survive. LaRouche's candidacy will immediately take on an extraordinary importance in the new political landscape.

Not surprisingly, this happens when other, conventional candidacies are in trouble. A small group of advisers within the Republican Party have been urging and planning for Ronald Reagan to resign, ostensibly because of ill health, but really to provide Vice-President Bush the platform of the presidency to ensure his election in 1988. President Reagan is suffering from the effects of his very serious cancer operation, but he now appears determined to serve through his

full term, and thereby to become the first president since Eisenhower to do so. Reagan is very concerned to achieve this stability in our national affairs.

As a consequence of his decision, however, Bush does not have the nomination wrapped up. He will have to fight for it against Jack Kemp, and perhaps other, darker horses. Even if he gets the Republican nomination, he will not have the authority of the presidency. In 1960, Eisenhower made no sustained attempt to pass on his mantle of authority to the struggling Richard Nixon. Eisenhower's aloofness during that campaign, more than the famous debate with John Kennedy, lost Nixon the election. It remains to be seen if Reagan will adopt the same attitude in 1988, but the possibility will be enough to keep George Bush guessing.

The Democratic side is even more wide open. Ted Kennedy's announcement that he will not be a candidate has removed the one person who represented a connection with the last 20 years of national politics in this country. One thing seems certain: Ted Kennedy did not willingly give up the ambition that has motivated the Kennedys over two decades. The decision was forced upon him. While Ted Kennedy himself is nothing more than a bloated and boozy version of 1960s-style liberalism, the very revival of anything representing a continuity with past political associations is a threat to the artificial political environment being generated today. Because Kennedy even betokens such associations, he has to be eliminated as a serious candidate.

The 'post-reality' candidates

Immediately upon Kennedy's announcement, Gary Hart was annointed "front-runner." In a sense, he is, because he is the perfect candidate of the "post-reality era" that is sup-

posed to be brought into being. Hart was George McGovern's campaign manager, which itself says a great deal about his political savvy. In his presidential campaign of 1984, he presented himself as the candidate of the Yuppies, the cocaine-oriented generation. But this Dr. Spock image is a phony. Before becoming McGovern's campaign manager, Hart spent three years in the Justice Department, and his true calling is to preside over the surrender of the United States as a superpower. In early January, Hart will declare his intention to seek the presidency rather than seek re-election for the Senate from Colorado.

However, even as the ink was drying on the "front-runner" hyperbole, voices were heard saying that Hart was not to be envied for being declared front-runner, and that it was more a set-up than a confirmation. In fact, the presumed opponents of Hart were glad to concede him his precarious status.

Foremost among them are the candidates stabled in the newly formed Democratic Leadership Council: Charles Robb, the retiring governor of Virginia; Bruce Babbitt, former governor of Arizona, and Richard Gephardt, representing the 3rd Congressional district in Missouri.

Whatever the qualities of these individuals, the national group they have created exists for the purpose of exploiting the national revulsion for Mondale-ism exhibited in the last election. The idea is to present a Democratic agenda for austerity so pleasing to the Interim Committee of the International Monetary Fund that it will win back for the Democrats the support of this critical international patronage. The philosophical outlook of this group, its "new realism," has been best expressed by Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm. Lamm has said that we are entering a new age in which prosperity is a thing of the past, and that, in deference to the younger generation, old people should die—as quickly as possible.

The challenge to this group of so-called new realists is supposed to come from Gov. Mario Cuomo of New York. In contrast to new-policy Democrats, Cuomo puts himself forward as the paragon of old-style liberalism, based on his speech at the Democratic National Convention in 1984. In fact, the Jesuit-trained Cuomo got his start in politics under Mayor John Lindsay of New York, where he was given responsibility for a conflict situation between warring ethnic groups. He managed it so successfully that both groups lost, thereby proving that he was indeed the inheritor of the Eleanor Roosevelt tradition of liberalism.

Genuinely wide open

Just because there is a definite element of "alike as peas in a pod" underlying the carefully cultivated images of the candidates, does not mean that the presidential derby in the Democratic Party is not genuinely wide-open. There is necessarily a real contest to determine which of these candidates can best sell himself to the voter in a setting in which the decline of the United States would become an accepted fact.

But this evolution leaves out two significant considerations. First, that the nation's decline is about to move from gradual to precipitous, because of the Gramm-Rudman budget-cutting, and because of the panic over AIDS. As a result, stupid and cowed citizens of our fading republic are about to become alarmed, very alarmed.

LaRouche has compared this sense of being startled to a grenade thrown into the foxhole. It takes away the option of doing nothing.

The second factor is, of course, the LaRouche candidacy.

In 1984, LaRouche appeared on national television 15 times. He and his movement are now about to reap the return on this enormous investment. Whereas before 1984, it was necessary when speaking to a stranger to explain at length who LaRouche was and what he stood for, in 1986, the stranger more than likely will cut you off, him. I saw him on television." He will go on to add, "I agreed with everything he had to say." If LaRouche had received the votes of everyone who agreed with him, he would be serving as President today.

But that is not the way politics happens. Only when the hand grenade is in the foxhole—only when reality as it is intrudes—do our citizens respond. The morality simply is not otherwise there. Nor would the doses of reality about to be administered be fruitful if LaRouche's candidacy was not there. The candidacy itself serves as the institution around which the people of this country can politically regroup—from either party.

This process is under way now, in 1986. In fact, it will either prove to be decisive in this year, or this nation, and with it, the human race will effectively disappear.

In his recent remarks, LaRouche has defined this process as a paradigm shift, a change of mental outlook from the prevailing immorality and stupidity now dominating the population. The means to achieve this paradigm shift is the process of building a candidates' movement great enough to challenge and defeat the present Congress in the 1986 elections. At the same time, the movement will take over the Democratic Party by successfully running for party positions.

So, as we begin the new year, the political reality is totally different from the outlook of the professional politician. No challenger has a really secure situation. Each is preening himself to court the voter, as the voter appears to be today. But only LaRouche and those who have chosen to run with him are prepared to address the voter as he is becoming the victim of the greatest social turbulence this country has witnessed in a half century. As always, the leading candidates are so identified as to cover the entire range of perceived credible positions on the political spectrum. But from the standpoint of reality, this is a tiny portion of the real spectrum. It will be LaRouche's candidacy within the first six weeks of the year that will redefine this reality spectrum for the other candidates, and that's when the fun will really begin.