

LaRouche Democrats Lead Resistance to Bush Fascist Push

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On the afternoon of Feb. 1, the nomination of John Ashcroft as the next U.S. Attorney General passed the Senate by a narrow 58-42 vote, with all but eight Senate Democrats voting against him. The vote capped two days of intensive debate, and a personal visit to Capitol Hill by President George W. Bush, where he threw a public fit over the delay in the confirmation of his choice as the nation's top law-enforcement official.

Bush's Capitol Hill antics underscored just how right Lyndon LaRouche was, when he warned that the appointment of Ashcroft was key to the Bush gang's drive to create a crisis-management rule-by-decree government, reminiscent of the early days of Adolf Hitler's "constitutional coup" in Germany in February 1933. LaRouche did not merely warn of the danger of a bureaucratic fascist regime in Washington, should the Democratic Party capitulate on the Ashcroft nomination; he personally led a mobilization of all Democrats and honest Republicans to defeat the Ashcroft nomination.

In response to the LaRouche call, which was echoed in powerful testimony submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee by LaRouche representative Dr. Debra Hanania Freeman, thousands of LaRouche Democrats mounted a massive campaign to force Senate Democrats to defeat Ashcroft, through a filibuster or whatever other means might suggest themselves. It was, in fact, the impact of that mobilization, that forced the Democratic leadership in the Senate to go as far as they did, in publicly pillorying Ashcroft, first in Judiciary Committee hearings, and then on the floor of the Senate, in two days of debate.

Despite a shameful last-minute capitulation by Senate Democrats, signalled by Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle's (D-S.D.) Feb. 1 press conference, explaining, defensively why he decided to forgo a nomination-killing filibuster, the base of the Democratic Party and major portions of the trade union movement were activated by the massive call-up and lobbying campaign by LaRouche supporters.

Not since the LaRouche Democrat mobilization of Americans to Defend the Presidency, in the autumn of 1998, have the Democratic Party and the U.S. labor movement been so mobilized, to defend the general welfare of the nation against a potentially fatal attack. Other groupings in and around the Democratic Party joined in the Stop Ashcroft drive—often on the basis of single-issue objections to Ashcroft's checkered record of segregationism, racism, and religious fundamentalist bigotry. But, as countless Democratic Party officials and labor leaders acknowledged, in the run-up to the Senate vote, it was the LaRouche machine that was uniquely providing the marching orders and precise battle updates that drove the Ashcroft fight.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Ca.), in her statement on the floor of the Senate during the Ashcroft debate, reflected the impact of the LaRouche Democrat and other mobilization to stop Ashcroft, reporting that she had received 50,000 letters, faxes, e-mails, and phone calls from constituents, who demanded, by a ten-to-one margin, that she fight all-out to defeat Ashcroft.

The effectiveness of this mobilization—despite the decision of Senate Democrats to forgo a filibuster (only 41 votes were required to defeat Ashcroft's confirmation by

filibuster)—has delivered a strong message to President Bush and those in his Administration who are looking, with the Ashcroft confirmation, to tear up the Constitution.

The California Crisis and the NAPM Report

As the pitched battle was raging on Capitol Hill, the Bush Administration was already facing its first grave crisis, and was showing itself wanting, just as LaRouche had warned. As reported by Marsha Freeman elsewhere in this issue, California's electricity deregulation scam has plunged the real economy of the Western states of the United States into a grave crisis—a crisis that can only be solved by putting California's two largest utility companies through bankruptcy reorganization, by Presidentially mandated power deliveries to distressed communities and industries, and by re-regulating the entire nationwide electrical power grid.

These policy requirements—which represent the only alternative to a hyperinflationary crisis at home, and a near-term financial meltdown globally—fly in the face of “Bush family values.” George W. Bush owes his political career and his personal fortune to Enron Corp. chief executive officer Kenneth Lay, whose company is at the forefront of the electricity deregulation looting, and to Richard Rainwater, the biggest health maintenance organization pirate in America. To actually solve the “California crisis,” President Bush would have to take actions that would likely bankrupt Enron, and every indication is that the President would sooner go for police-state rule than betray the “shareholders values” of his backers.

Within days, as the energy emergency decree by Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham runs out, President Bush will be faced with an out-of-control economic disaster in California, a state that represents one-sixth of the entire economic output of the United States. And the disaster has already spread to neighboring states like Oregon, Washington State, Arizona, and Nevada.

Ironically, as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has probably already realized, a failure to deal with the California crisis in a sensible way will jeopardize all of the Administration's much-hyped plans for an early deployment of the National Missile Defense system (NMD), and a major buildup of America's military capacities. No region of the country is more vital to the defense-industrial sector than California and the Pacific Northwest, which is the home to major production facilities of Lockheed-Martin, Intel, Microsoft, and Boeing. As a result of skyrocketing energy costs in Washington State, Alcoa, one of the major manufacturing firms left in America (and the company headed, until last month, by Bush's Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill), has announced it is ready to shut down its Spokane plant and move its operations out of the region.

As LaRouche warned, the Bush Administration, barring

a major change in ideology and policy, is doomed.

California is but the tip of the iceberg. On Feb. 1, the National Association of Purchasing Managers issued their monthly report, which reflects activity in the real economy. They announced that the index of monthly orders for capital goods, raw materials, and manufacturing equipment had plunged to levels not seen since 1991—when the country was in the throes of a deep recession.

Homeland Defense . . . Against What?

On the very day that John Ashcroft was being confirmed by the Senate as Bush's Attorney General, a Congressionally mandated national panel, chaired by former Senators Warren Rudman and Gary Hart, issued a report on the future of U.S. national security.

The report focussed on the threat of a major terrorist attack against the United States, involving the use of weapons of mass destruction—biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons. The Hart-Rudman report concluded that the President should establish a new Cabinet-level agency, the National Homeland Security Agency, to oversee and coordinate the activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Border Patrol, the U.S. Customs Service, and the U.S. Coast Guard. The report also called for the National Guard to take primary responsibility for crisis response, in the event of an attack by weapons of mass destruction, or other threats to the internal security of the United States, by vastly upgrading their capabilities.

In the context of the Ashcroft confirmation, and the very real crisis soon to spread from California across the entire country, the Hart-Rudman recommendations fit precisely into the rule-by-decree schemes that prompted the President to stage his first public temper tantrum on Jan. 30 on Capitol Hill. It was under George Bush, Sr., who headed the Reagan Administration's “continuity of government” secret parallel government, that Lt. Col. Oliver North set forth plans to round up tens of thousands of American “dissidents” and throw them into detention camps, in the event that protests against the Administration's Iran-Contra covert wars mushroomed out of control.

It was with all of these factors in mind, that Lyndon LaRouche, moments after the Ashcroft vote, called for a continuation of the mobilization of patriotic Democrats, to defend the general welfare against the Bush Administration's “shareholder values,” by fighting for a competent policy solution to the California crisis—a solution in the spirit of Franklin D. Roosevelt's mobilization of the American people to end the Depression and defeat Hitler. It is through precisely such a continuing mobilization that the Democratic Party can shed the last vestiges of the Gore “New Democrats” disease, and rally the country against every effort by Bush and company to tear up the Constitution in a replay of Hitler's Reichstag fire.