

to stave off terrorism, and chided President Bush for failing to offer solid plans for Iraq's future. He said that "repairing and rebuilding alliances" is key to avoiding terrorism. Lugar, too, had warned in 2003 that the Administration had not given enough consideration to what would happen in Iraq after the fighting ended.

Not Under Control

Of course, the Senators' behavior still contrasts sharply with that of leading Republicans in the House of Representatives. There, as demonstrated by the opening remarks in the May 7 hearing held by House Armed Services Committee Chairman Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.), many Republicans have taken up Dick Cheney's line that the chicken-hawks and Rumsfeld are doing a terrific job, and should not have to be "diverted" by in-depth investigation into the prison torture scandal. The animosity has gone so far that the May 21 House hearing turned into a Republican attack on the Democrats. Some Republican Representatives have even attacked the Senate Republicans for taking the issue so seriously.

On May 20, party leaders decided to bring in President Bush for a meeting with the party faithful, in hopes of forging party unity again. After what was described as a pep talk, "participants filed past a bank of microphones to announce that they were unified in support of Bush and that there had been no dissent expressed at the meeting," according to the *Washington Post* account. "Bush took no questions," they added.

Despite the President's appearance, Senate Majority Leader Frist abruptly postponed the vote on the budget resolution until June, due to in-fighting among the Republicans. Four Senators are refusing to pass the budget unless it links new tax cuts with spending cuts, or other tax increases. The four hold-outs are Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Lincoln Chafee (R-R.I.).

Congressional sources report that the Cheney crowd is continuing to put massive pressure on the Republican Senators, in hopes of containing both the investigation of the prisoner torture scandal, and the general revolt against the neo-conservatives' imperial policy. In addition, President Bush has been scheduled by his controllers to give weekly speeches, up until the June 30 deadline for transfer of power to the Iraqis, in order to rally the nation behind his conduct of the war. If his May 24 speech to the Army War College was any indication, this tactic will not do the trick. The President stuck with his standard teleprompter mantra: Staying the course, Iraq for the Iraqis, creating democracy, ending tyranny, *ad nauseam*.

Meanwhile, President Bush's poll numbers continue to drop (They are now below 50%), and gossip columnists are floating options such as Rudy Giuliani to replace Cheney on the ticket. The ball is left in the senior Senators' court, to rebuild the honor of the party, and the nation.

Democratic Party Is In Political Disarray

by Nancy Spannaus

This is not the first time that the Democratic Party's banker-run leadership has decided to ram a candidate down the party's throats early in the election year, only to see the choice blow up in their faces. One of those times was 1984, with the "early endorsement" of Walter Mondale. This year, Terry McAuliffe's orchestration of a primary process that would pick a "winner" by early March, has resulted in a political disaster which promises to be just as bad.

The pundits, Democrat and Republican, are agog at the ability of presumptive Democratic Party Presidential nominee John Kerry to "blow it." Faced with a golden opportunity to contrast clear vision and principles from the FDR tradition of the party, with the all-around incompetence and arrogant venality of the Cheney Administration, the Kerry campaign is putting its message forward with all the oomph of a "me, too."

What Bill Clinton Knows

While the polls show Kerry barely holding his own—despite the enormous scandal facing the Administration's Iraq war effort—the even-more telling symptom comes in looking at the ongoing Democratic state primary elections. These continue to show a solid 25-30% or more of the party faithful voting *against* Kerry in many states, despite the fact that most of the other candidates have dropped out of the race! Even more telling is the fact that the voter participation has sunk to what appears to be new lows, hitting a level between 7% and 15% of registered Democrats in Kentucky, and 15-20% in a number of other states.

As the Kerry campaign keeps failing to get what they call "traction," a number of groupings have emerged within the Democratic Party, vying to take control of the candidacy. On top, for the moment, is the DNC-McAuliffe grouping, with its centrist "professionals" like Mark Penn and Bob Shrumm, who are advising Kerry to "stay cautious," and not strike out with a bold challenge to the President on Iraq policy, in particular.

Also on the inside track is the Kennedy grouping, which includes both principled liberals, and a strong component of operatives controlled by the Venetian-style banking group, à la Schachtian banker and Democratic string-puller Felix Rohatyn of Lazard Frères. This latter grouping is vectored in the losing direction of appealing to the upper 20% of income brackets, as the known voting "power" in the party. Rohatyn himself is the leading representative of the Democratic Lead-