

Elephants & Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

The 'root canal economics' of Bob Dole

Sen. Bob Dole kicked off his presidential campaign Nov. 8 in typical fashion: by talking out of both sides of his mouth. The Kansas Republican has been running around the country, pledging to take care of the poor and elderly. But he's also taking a directly contradictory tack, preaching the merits of "economic sacrifice" and the alleged need for austerity at every opportunity.

Indeed, this was the chief message of his formal declaration of candidacy Nov. 9. Dole announced that the "one fundamental theme to my campaign" is a pledge that "Americans must stop living for today while ignoring the long-term implications of our decisions and actions for our children and generations to come." He added that "no area of federal spending would be off limits."

In a speech a few days earlier in Iowa, Dole—practicing what the *Washington Post* characterized as "root canal economics"—declared: "If you are going to have an operation next month, you are going to try to find the best doctor you can, someone who understands how that works. I think I am that candidate. . . . We will either sacrifice for our children, or we will continue to make our children sacrifice for us."

Dole's talk about sacrifice is by no means just rhetoric: He has proposed limiting Social Security cost-of-living increases to 2% per annum, and wants to raise taxes. Two years ago, he lobbied for a freeze on Social Security benefits.

He also has declared that he will

seek a constitutional convention to enact a balanced-budget amendment. This would be a disaster, not only for economic policy, but also for the damage such a convention could wreak on the Constitution itself.

Not that Dole especially cares, as witnessed by his recent statements on strategic policy. Interviewed recently on a national TV talk show, Dole candidly admitted that he's in favor of the Russian proposal for putting a moratorium on SDI deployment.

Dole said he would have no qualms about an SDI moratorium as part of a strategic-arms deal. "If there were some appropriate moratorium, then I think we might be able to work that out. . . . We're not going to deploy anything."

'None of the above' tops poll—again

A new poll commissioned by the *Chicago Tribune* and conducted by Democratic pollster Peter Hart provides fresh evidence that the vast majority of Democratic voters remains totally unimpressed by the party's current crop of sanctioned presidential candidates.

One-third of those interviewed, including one-fifth of the Democrats, said that "the Democratic candidates don't seem up to the job of being President," and are "too disorganized to run the country."

Only 35% of the Democrats questioned in five major electoral states—Illinois, California, New York, Texas, and Florida—said they were satisfied with the candidates, while another 10% said they weren't sure.

The poll gives a big boost to New York Gov. Mario Cuomo—no doubt one of its major goals. Polled on whom they would prefer as a candidate—Cuomo, New Jersey Sen. Bill Brad-

ley, or "other"—23% of the dissatisfied category chose Cuomo, 6% selected Bradley, and 12% responded "other."

Cuomo inches closer. . .

Speaking of Mafia Mario, he's moving from a *de facto* to a *de jure* candidacy, bit by bit. On Nov. 12, the governor dropped some of his standard coyness on the issue, during an interview with NBC-TV national news, stating that, under certain circumstances, "of course I would" become a candidate.

"If forces would, by accident or whatever, say, 'Mario, this is your obligation, you must do it'—of course I would do it. That's why I'm a politician, to try to help people."

Just a week earlier, Cuomo and his staff had begun to put out the knives for Mike Dukakis, who would be one of Cuomo's chief rivals, should he enter the race. Dukakis had no real ideas, complained the Cuomo camp, and wasn't giving enough credit to Mario. That was a sharp shift for Cuomo, who had been one of the Massachusetts governor's biggest boosters.

Jaruzelski endorses George Bush

Vice President George Bush has picked up an endorsement from a rather unusual quarter: Poland's Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski. Bush met with the Russian surrogate when he toured Europe in September.

According to a *Washington Post* reporter who interviewed Jaruzelski, the Polish ruler "emphasized that he did not want to interfere in American politics," but "his personal view was that Bush was an exceptional politician and a realist for whom he could vote."