

Bush may find that his Halcion days are numbered

by Chris White

With the Republican Convention set to open in Houston on Aug. 17, George Bush's nomination, almost certain though it might appear, is by no means locked up. An open convention could be in the cards, as Bush's feared "attack" machine has begun to disintegrate.

Gov. Carroll Campbell of South Carolina has been one of the GOP "Young Turks" tipped to replace Dan Quayle as Bush's running mate. Emerging from a White House meeting with Bush on July 27, he told the press that all the rumors circulating about the Bush campaign, including the state of Bush's health and the future of Quayle, do so only because of the Democrats' "dirty tricks department." Quite an incredible assertion.

There's a double-sided quality to all such rumors. Those who come to Quayle's defense, like Bush's former drug czar William Bennett, or the syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, do so on the basis that there isn't much point fiddling with the lower slots on the ticket, while the problem is at the top. William Weld, the governor of Massachusetts, shocked the local press corps on July 20, when he was asked about Quayle after signing the state's budget. "I know many of you might not agree with me," he said, "but I think he's got the best political mind in the White House." A stunned silence was followed by gales of laughter.

Will Bush resign?

It has been some weeks now that stories have been circulating to the effect that Bush would resign prior to the GOP convention in Houston. July 7, the eve of the Munich summit of the Group of Seven nations, was one of the first occasions the story came our way. Bush, we were told privately, would "resign for health reasons" shortly after, perhaps two weeks after, the Democratic Convention. He would be replaced as Republican standard-bearer by Jack Kemp, Jim Baker, Bob Dole, or even Dan Quayle. The story surfaced publicly in the British press two weeks later.

By July 27, New York Sen. Al D'Amato (R) was telling Cable News Network's Larry King that he thought Bush might resign before the convention, and had thought so for some time. Earlier he had put the odds at one in a billion, but now he thought it more like one in a hundred. Bush's spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, was sensitized enough to deny D'Amato's remarks at the very next opportunity.

Those who have read the last chapter of the recently published *Bush: The Unauthorized Biography*, by Webster Tarpley and Anton Chaitkin (Washington, D.C.: EIR, 1992), know quite well that Carroll Campbell's "Democratic dirty tricks" denials are absurd. Bush's mental and physical health have been a major issue since the Dec. 23, 1989 press conference during the invasion of Panama, which was the occasion for Lyndon LaRouche to issue his evaluation that Bush was insane. That wasn't Democratic Party dirty tricks, nor were the thyroid disorder and the consequences which followed from its treatment, nor the worldwide television broadcast of Bush's breakdown in Japan.

The 'recovery' fails to materialize

What else was going on, when the story about Bush's resignation was first pushed our way, on the eve of the G-7 summit? There was the release of the June unemployment figures, 7.8% officially, and in reality much higher. And, there was the Federal Reserve's decision, for the 23rd time since the end of 1989, to lower interest rates. The combination of the two informed the world that the "recovery," or "perception of recovery," which Bush and company has been counting on to fuel their fall campaign, didn't exist.

The political conclusions which were drawn from this demonstrated that the psychiatric disorders at the top have permeated to some depth through the White House ranks. White House Chief of Staff Sam Skinner and his friends had been the most vocal proponents of the view that there was

a "recovery" in the works. Up came Skinner's bureaucratic opposition, which had insisted that the economy was worse than the rosy view presumed, with the astoundingly crazy view, that since they were now proven right, the economy doesn't have to be an election issue. Concentrate instead on bashing Congress, and stressing "family values" and "character," they said.

That approach has not sat very well with the Republican faction in the Congress. Campaign chief Charles Black was roasted by Republican senators over this collapse of the Republicans' campaign perspective. In the last week of July, it was the turn of Fred Malek and Dan Quayle to be roughed up by the House members. D'Amato is not the only one who fears that Republicans will be pulled down into massive defeat on Bush's coat-tails, precisely because of the economic debacle which the victors in the bureaucratic infighting insist they don't have to address.

Things are not much better in any of the other six governments which make up the G-7 leadership of the industrialized world. The world is going to hell in a hand-basket, with western policy toward Russia and the recently liberated East about to produce a massive backfire effect, and with the western nations each and all in the grip of depression and financial collapse, spreading outward from the U.S. and Britain. And there is no one minding the store.

Under such circumstances, to put out the word that Bush will step down, is tantamount to saying that he ought to be kicked out if he doesn't. Bush is not necessarily the personality type to step down voluntarily.

More scandals brewing

In the second and third weeks of July, Europe was abuzz with discussion of how Bush was going to step down. In the United States, something different was being played up: the House Democrats' decision to demand the appointment of an independent counsel to investigate Bush and Reagan administration policy toward Iraq from 1985-86, until after the setup of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The decision was voted up, and the request deposited in the lap of Attorney General William Barr.

Coverage of this matter has dealt, in the main, with the matter of how horrible it was that Iraq's military capabilities were being fostered during the years before the war. That is not the thrust of the request for a counsel to be appointed, however. Rather, it is the same charge which has been leveled against this administration and its forerunner, since the Iran-Contra scandal broke, namely that they systematically misinformed and misled Congress and the American public about what they were doing.

Rep. Henry Gonzalez (D-Tex.), chairman of the House Banking Committee, has taken the lead in this. Indeed, the information he has obtained, and laid before the House, including in speeches which no other member attended, helped to break everything open. Gonzalez has documented, in the case of policy toward pre-war Iraq, that the policy of mis-

leading Congress comes right out of the Oval Office; that individual cabinet secretaries were briefed by Bush on what to tell Congress, because the matter was "sensitive." The charge was repeated by Gonzalez on July 21, when he told Congress of a November 1990 administration report blaming European, and particularly German companies, as the source of Iraq's military supplies. The accusations were false, he charged, because it was U.S. companies which were arming Iraq. "From Day One, it has been the policy of this administration to mislead Congress and the public," the congressman charged.

Lawrence Walsh, the independent counsel investigating the Iran-Contra affair, is supposed to be preparing to indict additional high-level members of the former Reagan administration for organizing a coverup of weapons supplied to Iran, and misleading and lying to Congress on behalf of the coverup. Those named in press speculation about the activities of Walsh's new grand jury include Ronald Reagan, George Shultz, Edwin Meese, and Donald Regan. Spokesmen for Reagan and Regan say they have been assured that their principals are not targets of the expanding probe. The investigation now focuses, apparently, on meetings in October and November 1986, which were attended by those named, and also by George Bush, who was the administration official responsible for the activities which were then covered up.

It seems that Bush may have been offered a gentlemanly way to go: Step down for health reasons—or face the consequences later. This is known to some as the "Nixon precedent," in which the serving President resigns from office to escape indictment. Whether Dan Quayle would play Gerry Ford to George Bush's Richard Nixon, is another question. Ford pardoned Nixon shortly after becoming President himself.

Those who remember what Ronald Reagan did to Michael Dukakis, the day after the Republicans' New Orleans convention finished in 1988, when he sank the Dukakis campaign on the question of the candidate's mental health, might do well to take another look at Bush's health record.

The Public Citizen Health Research Group presented its findings on the drug Halcion to the Food and Drug Administration on July 22, and demanded that the drug be banned as "unsafe." According to Dr. Anthony Kales of Pennsylvania State University, "the drug produces very frequent and severe central nervous system and psychiatric reactions, including memory impairment, hallucinations, excitability, insomnia, and anxiety." Kales thought that taking the drug, which Bush does, could have contributed to his breakdown in Tokyo. Bush's doctor, Burton Lee, said the President takes it very rarely, only when he is on an extended overseas trip, and "his schedule is totally out of whack."

This year, Bush has had to give up what even Saddam Hussein couldn't take away from him: his golf, speed-boat, and tennis vacation in Maine's Kennebunkport. You can guess what that is going to do to his schedule.