

A new effort to scrap the U.S. Constitution

by Robert Zubrin

At a semi-secret invitation-only meeting in Washington D.C. on Oct. 29-30, a group of U.S. patriots formed a "Committee on the Constitutional System," committed to abolishing the U.S. Constitution in favor of a British-style parliamentary system. Such a system would allow for the fingertip control of the U.S. executive through media-run scandals and government crises, allowing for "votes of confidence" and other features of European-style political tragicomedy, with the consequent creation and destruction of new governments at the whim of the oligarchy. It also would foster combinations of Presidents with a parliamentary majority, able to ram through legislation without the restraint of Supreme Court review to ensure constitutionality.

In America's anglophile elite, the group stated that it had "been formed by some of us who believe that the causes of deadlock are less in the qualities of our elected leaders than in the unique separation of executive and legislative powers established by the Constitution. . . . A governmental structure deliberately designed to frustrate a despot who seeks to assemble its powers for evil purposes must also, inevitably, frustrate democratic leaders who have been chosen by the people to exercise its powers for good and worthy ends." In an interview with a reporter Nov. 4, Peter Schaffler, the group's coordinator, elaborated that the group's targets for amendment include separation of powers between executive and legislative branches, judicial review of the legislature, and the electoral college system of electing Presidents.

According to Schaffler, those in attendance at the founding meeting included Jimmy Carter's Trilateral Commission counsel Lloyd Cutler, and former Defense and Treasury Secretaries Robert S. McNamara and C. Douglas Dillon, both of whom are board members of the Draper Fund for world population reduction. Additional members of the group, who however could not attend the meeting, were Nixon adminis-

tration mastermind Bryce Harlow, zero-growth Senators Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), lateral Commission Senator William Roth (R-Del.), Henry Reuss (D-Wis.) former Law of the Sea Treaty negotiator Elliot Richardson. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) join at some time in the near future when the Committee's current list of 30 members is broadened to include a second tier.

Due to the nature of the Committee and its discussions, press will not be invited to its meetings nor will transcripts be made available. "We don't want to wake up the next day and see what we've said reported in the *New York Times*," Schaffler said. For similar reasons, he refused to reveal at this time more than a handful of names of those participating. He added, however, that negotiations are in progress to bring in a member of the administration "at the cabinet level."

Organizing plans

The Committee's immediate plans are to use its control over Congress's Joint Economic Committee (which is chaired by Henry Reuss) at which Cutler, Dillon, and Richardson, as well as former Pennsylvania Senator Hugh Scott and Professor James Sundquist of the Brookings Institute will all testify on the need to radically revise the Constitution. Following that, there will be another meeting with the expanded membership of the Committee in Washington in January, followed by regional sessions around the country. Eventually the Committee intends to emerge with a "prestigious" set of recommendations for constitutional amendments, which some of its members will then introduce into Congress.

The founding of the Committee represents the culmination of several years of maneuvers on the part of Lloyd Cutler, who initiated the movement with an article published in the New York Council on Foreign Relations' *Foreign Affairs* quarterly in 1980, in which he termed the continuation of the American constitutional system into the 1980s "dangerous" and urged the "appointment of a bipartisan presidential commission" to study how to transform it into a parliamentary mode. Cutler, whose sense of judicial morality was made apparent through his role in covering up Billy Carter's extensive connections to Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi and Sicilian Mafia kingpin Michele Papa, wrote in a recent op-ed in the *New York Times*, in which he said that henceforth the Supreme Court should not have to hear cases brought by just anybody, but only "important" cases.

Coordinator Schaffler claims that the Committee's plan to produce its official recommendations by 1985-86 is timed to coincide with the upcoming 200th anniversary of the Constitution. From a practical standpoint, Committee circles hope that Ted Kennedy, version, will be in the White House in 1985, enhancing the project's chances of success.