

Gore campaign is dying a slow, painful death

by Debra Hanania Freeman

Democratic activists allied with Vice President Al Gore's bid for the Democratic Party Presidential nomination are growing increasingly alarmed. Though Gore's nomination was once thought to be inevitable, there is widespread speculation among leading Democrats that Gore will not make it through the summer.

In Washington, the view is that the Vice President "shot himself in the foot" when he chose his first day as an official candidate to attack President Bill Clinton for the Monica Lewinsky scandal. A leading Democratic Party strategist said, "It's the first time a suicide was broadcast on national television. What the hell were they [Gore's campaign advisers] thinking? It wasn't just that he came across as moralizing and self-righteous. The only thing Al Gore had going for him in this race was his association with Clinton. Separate Gore from Clinton, and he has no appeal whatsoever."

Could Gore hold a government together?

When Gore's fundraising efforts, once thought to be among his campaign's greatest assets, started to lag a couple of months ago, Gore brought in former California Representative Tony Coelho, as campaign chairman. But, when Coelho's "access to the big money" failed to turn things around, in a sure sign of panic, Gore hired Carter Eskew to replace his longtime friend and adviser Bob Squier as "message guru." For the second time in two weeks, the political press feasted on stories questioning Gore's personal loyalties.

Eskew was once Squier's business partner and protégé. The relationship ended in a very bitter and very public breakup. That was seven years ago. The two haven't spoken to each other since. During that time, while Squier worked diligently at Gore's side, Eskew made a pile of money working for those tobacco companies that Al Gore loves to de-

nounce and blame for the lung cancer that killed his beloved sister.

Gore did not deliver the news of Eskew's hiring to Squier himself, and more than a week later, has still not spoken to him about it. Eskew and Squier have not spoken to each other at all. Making matters worse, Squier responded by sending Gore what the *Washington Post* referred to as "an exploding package in the form of a front-page *New York Times* interview."

Gore's aides have tried to play down the melodramatic clash that seems destined for a spot on Oprah Winfrey's TV show, arguing that voters don't care whether Carter Eskew and Bob Squier get along. While that is probably true, the fact that Gore cannot hold his campaign staff together does raise questions, even among the most indiscriminating voters, as to whether he could hold a government together.

And, as his staff struggles to move the Gore campaign away from staff battles and toward a battle over "issues," the problems seem to grow. With Republican front-runner George W. Bush running 20 points ahead of Gore in the polls, Gore spent the week trying to out-Bush Bush.

'Tough on crime'

In a Boston speech billed as "Fighting Crime for America's Families," Gore promised savage measures against accused or convicted criminals.

He began his address arguing that police-state measures had already reduced crime dramatically. "Crime is at its lowest level in 25 years," Gore said. "We've lived up to every promise to you and your loved ones: . . . We funded 100,000 new prison cells, and expanded the death penalty. Criminals don't laugh at the legal system anymore."

He went on to unveil his "crime-fighting" program with

a series of proposals that some have called bizarre:

- “If you commit any violent crime in front of a child, you should pay a higher price.”
- “I believe we should raise the penalties for those who commit crimes against the elderly.”
- “Let’s punish crimes of hate with the full force of our laws.”
- “I will lead a fight to pass a Victims’ Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, so our justice system puts victims and their families first.”
- “I will fight for a Federal law . . . for a ban on gang-related clothing.”

The speech was met with a combination of horror and ridicule by legal experts. William Moffitt, the president-elect of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, said, “Al Gore poses a clear and present danger to the citizens of the United States.” Charging that Gore is willing to ignore even the most basic constitutional rights, Moffitt demanded to know exactly how Gore intended to enforce his proposed ban on gang-related clothing. “Will he establish the fashion police?” Moffitt asked sarcastically.

Marc Mauer, spokesman for the Sentencing Project, ridiculed Gore’s plan for longer prison sentences for crimes against the elderly. “How will we define elderly? Do you ask for an ID before you go and mug somebody?”

The DLC meets in Baltimore—without Gore

Two days later, when the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) convened its annual “national conversation” in Baltimore, Al Gore was conspicuously absent from the list of participants that included leading Democrats from across the nation: a host of governors, mayors, and state legislators, along with President Clinton, who keynoted the gathering.

Although Gore co-founded the DLC and headlined the DLC’s first “national conversation,” a DLC spokesman said that the Vice President had declined an invitation to speak. He offered no explanation as to why representatives of the Gore campaign were also absent, while supporters of Democrats Bill Bradley and Lyndon LaRouche were highly visible.

Gore’s absence fueled speculation about the growing rift between Gore and the President, as did the fact that the President chose not to plug his Vice President’s candidacy and, in fact, never even mentioned Gore’s name. And, adding another twist to the episode, just as President Clinton was beginning his address, Texas Gov. George W. Bush, the Republican front-runner, made an appearance at a Baltimore youth center, then dashed off to a fundraiser at a Baltimore hotel, adding another \$1 million to his already bulging campaign war chest.

Gore’s aides seemed desperate to deny that there was any strain between Clinton and Gore, or that Gore was afraid of a face off with Bush. Gore, they said, had simply committed himself to a series of nondescript events in Iowa.

But, the Gore campaign has been in a frenzy since late



They need each other

June, when anonymous quotations from Clinton aides began appearing in the news media, slamming the Vice President as overly eager to declare how “inexcusable” he found Clinton’s behavior in the Monica Lewinsky affair. In an attempt to bury talk of the obvious schism, Clinton’s Chief of Staff, John Podesta, held a staff meeting in which he angrily told Clinton’s aides to remain silent about their problems with the Vice President.

Gore staff pointed out that the President was still slated to make a series of fundraising appearances for their man, but White House spokesman Joe Lockhart later admitted that Clinton had made the commitments back in January, and was reluctant to pull out.

Clinton and Gore have not appeared on a public stage together since May 26, when the President journeyed to Texas to hail Gore’s “unparalleled combination of creativity and energy, experience, and determination.” The appearance was designed to heal Gore’s ego, which had been badly bruised when Clinton told a reporter that he was frustrated with Gore’s disastrous campaign performance.

In Texas, Clinton’s introductory speech was warmly greeted with one rousing ovation after another. When Gore followed Clinton with a 40-minute policy speech, he was derided as stiff, bureaucratic, and uninspired. Since then,

Gore has avoided events where, according to one leading newspaper, “he risks being upstaged by a President whose gifted intellect and smooth, graceful public speaking only underscores Gore’s inadequacies.”

Gore skipped a June 28 White House press conference on the budget. Nor did Gore attend the June 29 unveiling of the administration’s plan to overhaul Medicare, an issue considered central to the 2000 campaign. And, on July 15, the day after the DLC conference, when Clinton was speaking out for the Senate Democrats’ version of a popular patient protection bill, Gore was boarding Air Force II en route to a small event in Nebraska.

And, despite Podesta’s gag order, Clinton staffers readily conceded that they, and the President they serve, were fed up and “very upset” by Gore’s repeated sabotage of key Clinton initiatives.

Gore aides tried to counter by noting that the President did eat lunch with Gore in mid-July, and that the two were photographed together at the July 2 swearing-in ceremony for Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, an event a Gore spokeswoman said was their most recent joint public appearance. The Washington press corps wasn’t buying, arguing that there was nothing “public” about the event, which was closed to both reporters and the public.

The money is not coming in

New campaign finance reports, detailing the candidates’ fundraising and spending for the first half of 1999, seem to

indicate that the Democratic Party establishment is abandoning the sinking Gore ship. Gore’s campaign has had to spend heavily to raise the money it has taken in. For instance, in the second quarter, although Gore raised about \$8.7 million, he had to spend more than \$6 million to do it. And, Bill Bradley, who, along with economist and statesman Lyndon LaRouche, is also seeking the Democratic nomination, trounced Gore in a handful of key money states. In California, Bradley outraised Gore \$1.6 million to \$1 million. In New York, he collected more than twice as much as the Vice President.

But Gore’s biggest problem is that voters just don’t agree with him on critical issues. The Battleground Poll, conducted by Republican pollster Ed Goetas and Democratic pollster Celinda Lake, asked voters whether they had more confidence in Democrats or Republicans in Congress in dealing with education. Voters picked the Democrats by an overwhelming margin of 46% to 31%. But, when the same question was asked about candidates Gore and Bush, they were dead even at 40% each.

It is no wonder that Washington analysts are calling Bush Gore’s biggest booster. One key Democratic strategist admitted, “The only thing that even allows Bush to be taken seriously is the assumption that Gore will get the Democratic nomination. Knock out Gore, and it sinks Bush. Bush’s millions [in campaign funds] would be irrelevant. It will open up the entire race.” And, when pressed, he admitted that it was probably the only hope the United States had of making it into the next century intact.

Celebrate Apollo with a return to ‘American System’ economics

by Marsha Freeman

As *EIR* has been documenting, the world stands at the brink of the greatest financial crash in humanity’s history. This crash will only be the most dramatic manifestation of the past 30 years’ failed economic policies, which have destroyed the productive capabilities of the United States and most of the world’s economies.

Thirty years ago, the world was celebrating the most magnificent achievement of this century, the first landing of a man on the Moon. The success of the Apollo lunar landing program rested on the accomplishments, over the preceding 40 years, of the rocket team led by Wernher von Braun, which came to the United States after the Second World War. It required the genius of James Webb and the management team of the space

agency, to coordinate the efforts of a half-dozen NASA laboratories, hundreds of companies, and hundreds of thousands of scientists, engineers, and highly skilled workers.

But the Apollo program was only made possible through President John F. Kennedy’s commitment to an economic policy whose foundation rested on the mobilization of the nation’s human and technological resources. The President’s policy was based on the idea that a program with a noble national purpose would rally the productive forces of the economy, as long as there were direction from the top, as President Franklin Roosevelt had demonstrated during World War II.

Ninety days after taking office in 1961, and one month