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# THE CONTINUING CRISIS

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• January 12 to February 8, and the Kennedy campaign proceeds like a beautiful comet flaring across the northern skies, successively losing magnitude and even plausibility. To revive his fortunes, on January 28 Senator Kennedy delivered a major policy speech, the contents of which suggested that the Senator is now pitching his woo toward surviving members of the Wobblies. With the Wonderboy pulling away and the Mullah Brown catching up, sniggers are beginning to sound, and the faithful are beginning to wonder if there might not have been some mistake on the Senator's birth certificate.

• The Justice Department found itself in very hot water with the 96th Congress when it was revealed that the FBI had uncovered a plethora of venality flowing between eight or so distinguished solons and an FBI front, Abdul Enterprises, Limited, an Arab firm whose lawyer, so thought the cops, was a man named Weintraub. Moreover, the American-Arab Relations Committee also took umbrage and demanded in a formal statement that the FBI apologize to Arabs worldwide for fashioning a trap perpetuating a "prejudicial view of Arabs." Soon, Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti was feverishly testifying before congressional committees and reassuring Capitol Hill's nervous inhabitants that only eight of their fellows had been nabbed this time. Nonetheless, relations with the Arabs remained arctic, for their grumpy missive had never explained whether they were offended because the FBI ploy presented Arabs as the bestowers of bribes or the associates of congressmen. At any rate, this is Congress's second major scandal since Watergate. Nearly 100 congressmen have now slipped under the *particeps criminis* pale since 1970. All of which suggests that during Watergate Richard Nixon may well have blundered and unnecessarily alienated Congress when he asserted, "I am not a crook."

• In another inspired move, the Wonderboy sent Mr. Muhammad Ali, Esq., as a presidential envoy to the heads of five African countries to elucidate the mysteries of the Wonderboy's foreign policy. Unfortunately, the former pugilist and poet was set upon at the beautiful Dar es Salaam aerodrome by a mob of Tanzanian Dan Rathers. Soon word reached the White House that its 250-pound diplomatist had run amok somewhere in Africa and there was nothing the foreign service could do about it. Not only that, but he had called Mr. Leonid I. Brezhnev, Hero of Socialist Labor, one of "the two baddest white-men in the world." Who would explain the thing to the Soviet leader? Fortunately, the Wonderboy has had more experience with such lunatic interludes than any other American President, and so the boys at the White House continued to whistle their merry tune. On February 5, Mr. Hodding Carter stated that "the impact he's having is

tremendous." That was the day Ambassador Ali strutted about with the Kenyan presidential baton, which he had snatched from an agape President Daniel Arap Moi.

• Is a pattern emerging here? Miss Midge Costanza? Dr. Peter Bourne? The Hon. Andrew Young? Ambassador Ali? A supporting cast of thousands? As a careful student of the Carterian mountebankery, I strongly suspect that all of the above will be cited by our President as proof that, in these trying times, no other presidential candidate has had more experience in dealing successfully with idiocy.

• Advocates of the nation's prisoners-rights movement were dealt a serious setback when inmates at the New Mexico State Penitentiary freed themselves and duly began butchering each other into rudely-cut bacon, despite alternative prospects offered by the presence of 15 hostage-guards. In Hudiksvall, Sweden, a 31-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of robbing his three-year-old son's piggy bank. Pronouncing adoption "more permanent than marriage," a 21-year-old Milwaukee man won a petition allowing him to adopt his 23-year-old homosexual lover. On January 16 a hearing into the competence of former congressman Daniel Flood attracted anxious attention from erstwhile colleagues. The 16-term congressman is accused of having accepted more than \$50,000 in bribes; and his lawyers, using a defense tactic that could benefit scores of his old associates, are attempting to spring him on grounds of mental incompetence. How can they fail?

• In Moscow, Papa Brezhnev's memoirs are still very much on the minds of members of the intelligentsia. Already the winner of the Lenin Prize and widely accepted as a classic of modern Soviet literature, the memoirs have now been made into an oratorio that has become the musical season's rage. Acclaimed by Soviet critics for its "sincere pathos," the oratorio begins with young Leonid's log-cabin incubation and culminates in a grandiose portrayal of the dauntless patriot suavely opening the steppeland of Central Asia to agriculture. In other cultural notes, officials at the Berlin Zoo confected a laxative of linseed soup to purge a prized rhinoceros that had inadvertently gulped down a key ring during brunch. Finally, the Rutland, Vermont, *Herald* reports that Mr. Lloyd E. Welch, 19, was given a one-year suspended sentence upon pleading *nolo contendere* to charges that, at 4 a.m. on October 20, he masturbated nude in front of the Sticky Fingers Bakery and in full view of Miss Karen Babcock, baker.

• A foreign service officer, writing in the *Foreign Service Journal*, reports that the Wonderboy's Ambassador to Singapore arrived at his post unaware that there are two Koreas ("Did you say there are two separate Korean Governments? How come?") and that India and

Pakistan are not palsy-walsy ("You mean there has been a war between India and Pakistan? What was that all about?"). What is more, our President's appointee could not recollect having heard of Helmut Schmidt, James Callaghan, and Valery Giscard d'Estaing. Why not the best indeed!

• Soviet scientists have announced that they will soon bring into the world the first mammoth to tread the planet in ten thousand years. Using authentic mammoth cells discovered in Siberian tundra, the scientists plan to impregnate a female elephant that will then give birth to a mammoth, which, the scientists insist, will be used purely for peaceful purposes. In a striking show of political integrity, the American Nazi Party has aided Chicago police in indicting the Party's former Führer for sexually abusing little boys. In Teheran, the Islamic government has established a center for the abolition of sin, and in New York City, Mrs. Madalyn Murray O'Hair of the American Atheists is countering the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church's "Dial-a-Prayer" by setting up a "Dial-an-Atheist" telephone service, (212) 726-3647 for the faithful. And in Minneapolis, evangelist Billy Graham was slightly injured when he fell in the bathtub, possibly while attempting to replicate a famous Biblical feat.

• In Lyndon, Kansas, Mrs. Deborah Davis was arraigned for shooting her husband James, described as "kind of a counter culture type" who once told his lawyer of "contacts with little men in spaceships." Apparently Mrs. Davis had come to disrelish strongly Mr. Davis' trysts with her in a torture chamber maintained just beneath their residence, and she shot him as he slept in the couple's waterbed. A love-starved rapist was arrested at an East St. Louis, Illinois, hospital where he was having his tongue sutured. According to police, he lost a portion of it while attempting to rape a feisty 74-year-old woman. The woman duly turned the piece of tongue over to police, the police went to the hospital, and the puzzle was solved! And in Detroit, Mr. Marvin Travis, whose mother's body lay for over a year in her upstairs bedroom, told police that he was unaware she had succumbed because his deceased father had always instructed him to respect her privacy.

• The owners of Studio 54 began serving prison terms for tax evasion. Mr. Hank Aaron showed the charm of a real professional by insisting that he and not Mr. Pete Rose deserved to be honored as "The Player of the Decade." Mr. Aaron finished third behind Mr. Rod Carew. "I don't want to get into a racial thing," Mr. Aaron said, "but I was never the ideal person for the New York press"—and we all know of that institution's apartheid tendencies.

• Finally, Mr. George Meany died. Say what you will, but I shall miss the great plumber.

—RET

*Editor-in-Chief*  
R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

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*Contributors*  
Aram Bakshian, Jr., Christopher C. DeMuth,  
Terry Eastland, Jerry Gerde, K.E. Grubbs, Jr.,  
Neil Howe, Roger Kaplan, William Kristol,  
Leslie Lenkowsky, A. James McAdams III,  
Robert McTiernan, Judy Mathews,  
William H. Nolte, Terry O'Rourke,  
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# EDITORIAL

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## LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MY CANDIDATE

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

It is not always the gaudy show under the klieg lights that directs the destiny of a nation. Thucydides, Tacitus, Henry Steele Commager—all the greats of the historical sciences will tell you that events seen in their time as matters of small moment often change the lives of nations and civilizations. It is my view that the snickered-upon withdrawal from the Presidential race of the Hon. Larry Pressler—1962 recipient of the National 4-H Citizenship Award, Rhodes Scholar, U.S. Senator, author of press releases, and prophet of gasohol—could prove to be such an event.

The sages of the press corps laughed when Senator Pressler declared his candidacy, and they laughed again when he made his dignified retreat. Let them laugh; in some far-off time, in some quiet, book-lined *atelier*, a forlorn Gibbon will weep.

Let me assure you that the Iranians did not think Senator Pressler's candidacy very funny. "A gasohol still in every yard and farm," the prophet from Humboldt declaimed with his customary yelp, and the tumescent and pulsating Middle East shriveled to a more modest significance. Nor did the senior citizens in the Kremlin laugh when this unscotchable kid stepped forward. For that matter, Mrs. Antone Pressler was not laughing either. Mrs. Pressler is Senator Pressler's mother; and, if the *New York Times* is to be believed, Mrs. Pressler's role in past campaigns has been to write contributors "a painstakingly written long-hand thank-you note." A successful Presidential bid by her unusual son could have killed her.

How I would like to have seen Senator Pressler make it to the White

*Adapted from RET's Monday Column in the Washington Post.*

House. Not that I harbor any malice for his mother, but the Presidential presence of this gigantic *reductio ad absurdum* of the modern pol would quite possibly have had a more salutary influence on the American polity than a *coup d'état* led by the ghosts of Lincoln, Madison, and Grover Cleveland.

Look around Washington. Cock your ear to the baby talk emitting from every source of eminence and power. We live under a tyranny of *Homo sapiens* who are...well, who are incomplete as specimens of mankind go. The sleazy majority of pols practicing their black arts in the Great Republic have risen to prominence by saying things that are palpably untrue. Now as time rushes along, and the American condition worsens, it is becoming increasingly apparent that most of these effortless honey-foglers simply have no idea that there exists such a thing as truth. Does reckless abandon in economic

management, military preparedness, diplomacy, social welfare, and all the other realms of governance ever eventuate in Weimar and ruin? The pols apparently do not think so. Inflation, lawlessness, rising chaos—all such phenomena are, for our pols, the Mysteries of modern times. They respond to them with oratory and policy gestures that amount to little more than ceremony.

So irresponsible and extravagant has been the dance of American policy in recent years that today the Great Republic is viewed with amazement and alarm by its friends. Its enemies merely play with it, and its enemies are not thought of as playful fellows. The Rt. Rev. Khomeini and his galoots exploit our weird hysteria over race, creed, and sex, treating women and black hostages as fellow Third World heroes while treating men hostages as criminals. One wonders, had there been homosexual activists working in the American

Embassy, would the Holy Man's agents have freed them too?

Papa Brezhnev, his armies swarming all over Afghanistan's bourgeois hordes, puckishly declares that the world sees the United States "as an absolutely unreliable partner in interstate ties, as a state whose leadership, prompted by some whim, caprice, or emotional outburst...is capable at any moment of cancelling treaties and agreements signed by it." There is a neoconservative salvo against latter-day McGovernism for you. But that it came from Papa Brezhnev, in pursuit of whose favor so many of those obligations and treaties were violated, is a cruel twist.

Washington's sages now tell us that the Wonderboy will be invincible in 1980. He has botched so many things that the American people in their fathomless generosity will reelect him out of sympathy for his suffering. The analysis is unusual, but I am in no position to doubt.

Yet if Americans are about to elect a man President because he is pathetic, I say the time is ripe for Senator Pressler to throw his hat back into the ring. And just to insure that his campaign is more pathetic than that of our President I suggest he choose the Hon. Howard Baker as running mate. If a Pressler-Baker ticket is not pathetic enough, how about declaring the Hon. George Hansen as Secretary of State? How about throwing in the Hon. Charles C. Diggs, Jr., as Attorney General?

The possibilities are endless. President Pressler could choose a dozen cabinets and enough Supreme Court candidates for a century just by picking his Capitol Hill colleagues. For, truth to tell, Senator Pressler is not all that different from many of the other Solons and Numas who have contrived to govern us. □

