

# EDITORIALS



## VEEP STAKES

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

What decision could more hilariously demonstrate the hypothesis that in recent years American political leadership has suffered a massive loss of intelligence than Governor Michael Dukakis's choice of Senator Lloyd Bentsen as his running mate? Soon we shall see if George Bush has suffered a similar loss of intelligence.

Balancing the ticket is supposed to mean choosing a running mate from different areas of the country or from different cultural backgrounds, not from different ends of the philosophical spectrum. By choosing Senator Bentsen, Governor Dukakis has shown that to him ideas and principles are to be exploited, not implemented. His cynicism will not ingratiate him to his fellow liberals or to the conservatives in his party. What he got the other day when he reached beyond the confines of Massachusetts was a museum piece, a 1930s style Democrat with no television presence and no allure beyond Texas and the wheeler-dealer salons of Capitol Hill.

Senator Bentsen has in 1988 surpassed all his colleagues in snagging contributions from political action

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committees, a lush \$1.4 million. He is the maestro of the \$2,000,000 breakfast, having in 1987 proposed that 200 Washington lobbyists pay \$10,000 to enjoy breakfast with him. This practice ended only after a *Washington Post* exposé. So, there goes the sleaze issue, eh Governor Dukakis?

Governor Dukakis had plenty of sensible choices available to him. He could have chosen Congressman Lee Hamilton of Indiana who brings geographical balance and philosophical compatibility, and is a competent campaigner. Less liberal but equally attractive would have been Ohio's Senator John Glenn or Georgia's Sam Nunn. Rather, while bragging about how his campaign will march us into the future, Governor Dukakis is borrowing from the past, and a somewhat unsavory past at that. How does one explain such a botch? I return to the hypothesis that there has been a huge loss in political intelligence in the country. Over the past two decades too many trivial issues and humbug values have come to command the pols' attention. Such distractions now leave them just a bit stupid. Since early June poor Governor Dukakis has had to attend to all the conflicting zealots in his party. Traditional interests, such as labor unions, can be reasonably dealt with, but the new interests—the

aggrieved minorities, the inflamed liberationists—are usually beyond reason. Ultimately, such distractions impair a candidate's judgment.

Soon we are going to witness the result of Vice President Bush's judgment. Will he botch? There are plenty of Senator Bentsens in his party, too. I would hope that the Vice President will run a far superior campaign than most of the Republic's political connoisseurs expect. He has flummoxed around in recent months, but it is his advantage to be always underestimated. During the primary season he did well in debate and he has a fine television adviser in Roger Ailes, as Dan Rather so painfully demonstrated. Finally he is not bedeviled by the distractions that dizzy Democratic leaders.

Against Governor Dukakis's choice of the wan and aging Senator Bentsen I hope Mr. Bush will enlist New York's Congressman Jack Kemp, the vigorous and youthful ex-quarterback of the Buffalo Bills who wins the Democratic

blue-collar vote in his district every time. Kemp is a proven campaigner, whose support in the Republican primaries would have been substantially larger had the Rev. Pat Robertson not competed for it. Kemp is an agreeable man who would be a cooperative running mate. His views are consistent with the Vice President's on such major issues as the Strategic Defense Initiative, Central American policy, national security, and the means to sustained economic growth. He would help the Republican ticket in upstate New York, California, and the South, as well as with Reaganite Democrats. He gets along well with the press and has already been thoroughly scrutinized for bugs.

Finally Kemp will turn out the Republican conservatives who feel the White House has neglected them. As no less a political sage than Richard Nixon will tell you, a Republican cannot win without active participation from this constituency. And then consider the televised debate between Kemp and Governor Dukakis's number two! □

## JOHN LEHMAN'S ENEMIES

We know from published accounts that the enemies of former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman compose a shadowy lot. Some are defense contractors associated with behemoth corporations. Some are defense consultants. Some are mere admirals, but others are actual senators and congressmen charged with overseeing the Pentagon's relations with defense contractors. In fine, most of Lehman's enemies hold one thing in common: they are members in good standing of the Military Industrial Complex. Bear that in mind as the Justice Department's inquiry into military procurement fraud finds its way into the newspapers—and remember it was Lehman whose reforms made the procurement of ships and planes more competitive.

From 1981 to 1987 Lehman was the agile and indefatigable advocate of the

600-ship Navy—that being 100 more than when he arrived at the Pentagon. He was only twenty ships short of his goal when he left the Pentagon. Thus the enmity that so many in the Military Industrial Complex hold against him cannot issue from his dovishness. Lehman's growing Navy put doves in mind of the Spanish Armada, which was not as lethal and as gluttonous toward fossile fuel. To understand the enemies of John Lehman, who today murmur against him and the reforms he instituted, one needs to understand the slow, plodding, self-aggrandizing ways of bureaucracy as did Max Weber—after the emergence of statism in the last century—and as do such insightful political scientists as James Q. Wilson today. Bureaucracy spreads ceaselessly, making its own process more sacred than its original goal and more costly. The original goal of arms



procurement bureaucrats was effective weapons at economical prices. By the time Lehman arrived the procurement of weaponry had become more important than the goal, resulting in wasted taxpayers' dollars and inefficiency.

The irony of dragging Lehman's name into the present scandal is that his procedures have done more to open procurement to the public gaze than had theretofore been possible. For instance, peacetime admirals dealt with weapons contractors who most frequently had not had to compete with second and third bidders on a given weapon. Moreover, they operated on a cost-plus basis. Thus admirals were allowed to redesign weapons during the

life of the weapons' contract without regard to costs and usually free from scrutiny. Their monopoly contractors were glad to indulge the admirals' every whim, for with cost-plus contracts they merely added on higher costs and realized higher profits unencumbered by a competitor who might have given the Pentagon a better price. During the 1970s, every Navy program overran its original contract by 50 percent. With Lehman's reforms ship building programs came in *under* budget by \$8 billion.

Now the admirals must decide on a weapon's design before writing a contract, and contracts are written on a fixed-cost basis. What is more, contrac-

tors frequently have to compete for a weapons contract. In 1981, 85 percent of the Navy's contracts were awarded to contractors without competitive bidding and on the cost-plus basis. Now 75 percent are awarded competitively and at fixed prices. Finally, weapons contractors are now being required to invest their own capital in producing a military product, just as other companies do in creating products in a free market. Hitherto the government bought these plants and paid for the tooling according to the state socialist model that the Pentagon adopted during World War II.

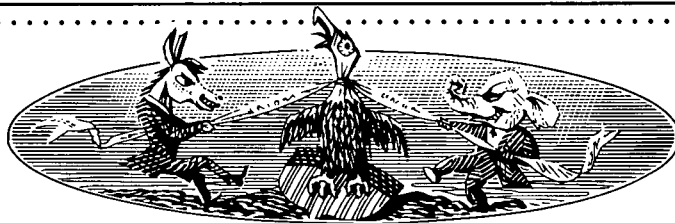
Lehman's reforms have saved the taxpayer billions of dollars and encouraged

weapons contractors to deliver their products efficiently. Many of his reforms have been recommended for the other branches of the military by a presidential commission headed by that eminent wizard of the private sector, David Packard of the Hewlett Packard Corporation. Thus those in the Military Industrial Complex who do not want to adapt to the efficient and more open ways of the market see the present looming scandal in procurement as a way to denigrate Lehman. Remember this: In all the news stories about John Lehman, no charges of illegality or even impropriety have been brought. All that is charged is that he changed the system—and for the good. □

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## CAPITOL IDEAS

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### GAYS ON PARADE

by Tom Bethell

“This year's theme—Rightfully Proud—is a very fitting one,” the *Bay Area Reporter* claimed in an editorial heralding this year's San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade and Celebration. “We have the right to be proud. We've earned that right. Look around you at what we have created and continue to create.”

I stationed myself on Market Street, and looked around the large crowd that had assembled for the “gay pride” parade. Rightfully Proud! About 3300 San Francisco residents have now died of AIDS, and an unknown number (officially estimated as 27,000) is infected with the virus. At one point the parade grand marshal Holly Near said: “We also acknowledge those who could not be with us today, either because they are frightened or in the closet, they are ill, or they had to be doing some other kind of work in their life. If everyone who supports gay and lesbian rights were here today, there would be even more than 275,000.” (San Francisco police estimated the crowd at 160,000.)

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Absent because ill, maybe. But absent because frightened? Homosexuals may be a minority, but their claim to be an oppressed one is less and less convincing. As the columnist Joe Sobran says, it takes a lot of clout to be an accredited minority with victim status these days, and homosexuals have shown that they have the clout. The only frightening thing about Gay Freedom Day in San Francisco is the possibility of being confronted with public accusations of homophobia and set upon by the mob (which has happened, I'm told).

The Mayor of San Francisco, Art Agnos, his wife, and two children rode in the parade in a convertible with an AIDS “sufferer.” (The word “victim,” after the word AIDS, is now on the Gay-Index, because it projects a negative image, supposedly.) Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi also rode in the parade. So did District Attorney Arlo Smith. Yes, even the D.A. was in the Gay Pride Parade. There he was sitting in the back of an open Chrysler, waving at the crowds. The parade stopped briefly, giving me the opportunity to venture out into the road.

“Mr. Smith,” I said, “do you get any criticism from straights for participating in this parade?”

The parade started up again and his car started forward. I walked along beside him: “People are people regardless of what their orientation

might be,” the D.A. said. “I love all people. I don't know about you.”

Meanwhile, the D.A.'s office in San Francisco is prosecuting a Free Pregnancy Center in the city, charging it with “unfair business practices” because its advertisement in the Yellow Pages failed to say that abortion is *not* among the services it offers. They lure in these young ladies, you see, give them free pregnancy tests and suggest an alternative to abortion. And for this they are being prosecuted by this man who loves-all-people.

On average, there are three AIDS deaths and nineteen abortion deaths a day in San Francisco.

KOOP FOR CZAR! That sign was being carried aloft between a contingent of transvestites and transsexuals. C. Everett Koop is the Surgeon General who touted condoms for homosexuals but would never be so foolish as to advocate filter-tipped cigarettes for smokers. But Koop wanted to be loved by the liberals, and now he is touted for Czar. In May, Koop released a report condemning tobacco as “addicting,” much as heroin and cocaine are addicting.

Koop might consider the possibility that homosexual acts are also addicting. And that condoms aren't “safe,” exactly. A recent University of California test of eight condom brands showed five to be of apparently questionable effectiveness. “But the find-

ings have been withheld from public release on the orders of Surgeon General C. Everett Koop,” according to Allan Parachini of the *Los Angeles Times*. “One in ten of those condoms tested leaked in each brand, except for the Contracept Plus, which leaked virus ten of the 25 times it was tested.”

Here, then, is Koop's pragmatism. Condoms were advocated because they “worked” (no time to delay because of moral hang-ups: our boys are dying out there), but when new evidence suggests this is not a very pragmatic solution after all, Koop will hide the evidence rather than abandon his position. The Surgeon General has also urged a ban on vending-machine sales of cigarettes, but not of condoms. Maybe he will change his mind if someone gets AIDS and claims he used condoms but was misled by the man in the nice white admiral's uniform. Koop won the Strange New Respect Award in 1987 for alienating his conservative friends. Evidently now he doesn't want to jeopardize his new-found liberal allies.

So now it's KOOP FOR CZAR and RIGHTFULLY PROUD, along with the D.A., the Mayor, and the Congresswoman, as wave after wave of the oppressed minority came strutting down Market Street, the signs reading AFFIRMATION MORMONS and SUPER-