

Bolton and DeLay Fiascos Highlight Revolt Against Bush

by Jeffrey Steinberg

A bipartisan Congressional revolt against the Bush Administration gained further momentum during the week of April 18, as United Nations Ambassador-nominee John Bolton and House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-Tex.) both appeared on the verge of being shot down.

But the revolt is not restricted to reactions against outrageous personalities and fringe politics. There is a growing recognition, among sane elected officials on both sides of the aisle, that the Bush-Cheney Administration is thoroughly bankrupt on economic policy, at a moment when the entire global dollar-based financial system is at grave risk, and when what remains of the physical productive sector of the U.S. economy is about to be shut down. It is the Bush-Cheney Administration's stoned silence on those larger issues that is fueling the climate, in which virtually any policy initiative by the White House can trigger a strong backlash.

LaRouche: 'We're On the Up'

This assessment was presented to a Peruvian symposium of oil sector workers and managers of PetroPeru on April 20, by U.S.A. Democratic Party figure Lyndon LaRouche, speaking by telephone from the United States.

"Well, we have an interesting situation in the United States," LaRouche declared. "I should start by saying that we are now in the onset of the greatest world crisis in the memory of anyone living today. What is coming on is much worse than the 1930s crisis. It could be controlled, but this would require a radical change in current policies. These changes will have to come, especially, from inside the United States itself. . . .

"The possibility of a change is not something far removed. This past weekend in the United States there was a crisis of the present government, the present Administration. This was

shown in many ways, including an issue about this fellow Bolton, whose confirmation is now in jeopardy, and it might not make it at all. So, there's a tendency now for a general shakeup in the U.S. government, in a governmental crisis. The Bush Administration is not a solid entity. It's a tyrannical entity, but it's not solid. It has great weaknesses, and it could collapse at any time. The whole system. . . .

"But we're on the up, and as of this past weekend, with the developments here in Washington this past weekend, there's a change. Everything is up to be decided. We'll have a change somehow, in some way, in the politics of the United States very soon. The fight is on now. The fight around the Bolton nomination, the fight around Social Security, these things are coming together. There will be a change, as some Republican Representatives, Senators, and others, move into a bipartisan cooperation on certain issues. That bipartisan cooperation can mean a sudden and significant change in the direction of U.S. policy-making.

"Under conditions of crisis, especially with the now-on-going collapse of the auto industry around General Motors, and Ford, this means that a change is being forced. The real-estate bubble in the United States is ready to collapse. You have the current account deficit, the fiscal debt of the United States, which is becoming worse; the manifest incompetence of the Bush Administration. These factors are coming together. We're on the verge of a potential sudden and significant change in U.S. policy. And that change in policy promises the feasibility of the kind of changes we want in other countries, and in international cooperation."

The Bolton Ambush

The most public display of bipartisan revolt against Bush-Cheney came in the U.S. Senate. On April 19, the Senate

Foreign Relations Committee froze the Bolton nomination as UN Ambassador, when George Voinovich (R-Ohio), one of at least three GOP members of the panel who are uneasy about Bolton, told Chairman Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) that he was not prepared to support the nomination. Faced with an offer from committee Democrats, led by Christopher Dodd (Ct.) and Joseph Biden (Del.), to extend the committee's probe of Bolton for at least two weeks, Lugar accepted it, realizing it was the best he could get.

Sources familiar with the background to the events report that Voinovich is now convinced that top White House officials lied to GOP Senators when they held a closed-door meeting to voice their concerns about the Bolton nomination, prior to the hearings. Furthermore, the sources report, hard evidence has now come into the committee's hands, confirming that Bolton tried to gather National Security Agency-obtained spy data on rival Bush Administration officials; and that he may have attempted to doctor his own personnel files.

Bolton, a close ally of Vice President Dick Cheney, is one of the most rabid of the neo-con figures still left in the Bush Administration, and his nomination to the UN post has angered many governments around the world.

DeLay on the Ropes

The day after the Bolton fiasco, the Bush White House took another big hit, when Republicans on the House Ethics Committee proposed to open a probe of Tom DeLay's "travel-gate" and other financial shenanigans. DeLay's international luxury travels have been the subject of a string of media leaks, all reportedly coming from moderate Congressional Republicans, who fear that his checkered reputation could bring down many Republicans in the 2006 midterm elections, unless he is removed from the House GOP leadership, and, preferably, from the Congress altogether. DeLay's corruption is intertwined with that of K Street lobbyist Jack Abramoff, who is the target of a string of Federal kickback and illegal lobbying probes.

Democrats on the Ethics Panel refused to go along with the probe, because they are still insisting, rightly, that the rules changes, giving the majority party absolute control over the committee, violate the basic purpose of such an oversight panel. Until those changes are reversed, they say, they will continue to block Ethics Panel business.

Partisan aspects of the Ethics Panel fight aside, there is underlying agreement among many Congressional Republicans and Democrats that DeLay has got to go. And there are other signs that the bipartisan collaboration against the Bush-Cheney regime's vicious domestic budget cuts are also gaining ground:

- On April 15, 41 House Republicans joined 49 House Democrats, in sending a letter to House Budget Committee Chairman Jim Nussle (R-Ind.), demanding that the Bush Administration's proposed 60% cuts in the High Density Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program be blocked. The Bush



The Bush Administration's nominee for Ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton (inset), is infamous for his statement that if 10 stories were knocked off the 38-story UN building, it wouldn't mean a thing, because there "is no United Nations."

budget would also shift control over the HIDTA effort from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy to the Justice Department, a move the Congressmen charged would terminate the vital program altogether.

- Several days earlier, 44 House Republicans wrote to Nussle, demanding that the Administration's efforts to cut Medicaid funds by \$16 billion also be blocked. The Medicaid cuts had already triggered a revolt in the Senate, where seven Republicans voted with all of the Democrats and Independent James Jeffords (Vt.) to restore the cuts.

So far, the response of the Bush Administration has been typically brutal. When Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) voiced hesitation to go ahead with the so-called "nuclear option," overturning Senate rules to ban minority filibusters of judicial nominees, he was hauled over to the White House, and read the riot act by Cheney and Karl Rove.

Such "dirty war" tactics may work in the near term, but they are laying the basis for a much more powerful bipartisan Congressional bloc, that could, in effect, put the Bush-Cheney White House into receivership for the duration of its term, and then take the kinds of emergency legislative initiatives that are going to be forced on Washington by the onrushing monetary and economic crises.