

Elephants and Donkeys by Richard Cohen

Will Democrats have a brokered convention?

Well-placed sources in the Democratic Party report motion among several key powerbrokers in the party's hierarchy to devise a deadlock for the presidential nomination in July at the party's San Francisco convention.

The miraculous challenge of Sen. Gary Hart to frontrunner Walter Mondale in New Hampshire, the subsequent New England primaries and caucuses, and the Florida results were instigated by Kennedy family operatives who have moved to retain the option of surfacing a draft effort for Teddy after a convention deadlock. Hart is considered essential for stopping a first-ballot Mondale victory.

Other powerful forces in the party are now close to a full commitment to a deadlocked convention with a brokered outcome.

Among those said to be in the thick of the maneuvering are nominal Mondale backer and former party chairman Robert Strauss, who has the backing of Pamela and Averell Harriman and long-time party insider Clark Clifford. Leading Southern conservatives and moderates, including former Florida governor Reuben Askew and Louisiana's Sen. Russell Long, are said to be pushing the Hart candidacy as a means of deadlocking the convention. Others such as Chuck Robb, the Virginia governor and son-in-law of former President Lyndon Johnson, are openly promoting uncommitted slates to the convention. Robb has shown interest in being Hart's running-mate.

Finally, my sources report that a hidden but strong chunk of the AFL-CIO, including the more conservative building trades and the Kennedy-influenced liberal unions, are looking

for a clear sign that someone other than Hart could beat Mondale for the nomination and would then break with federation president Lane Kirkland's support for Mondale.

An array of party 'machines'

A first-ballot victory for the former Vice-President is unlikely. To win on the second or third ballot, is a feat that will, in all likelihood, require the acquiescence of other powerful party forces. Hart, on the other had, would have to win the nomination on the first ballot. His "anti-labor" positions make it impossible for him to gain from Mondale delegates, while his own support—aside from the radical-liberal wing of the party—and the overlapping Philip Agee renegade wing of the intelligence community—is largely under the control of other machines (Kennedy, Long, and so forth).

Those presently supportive machines have no real interest in a Hart candidacy. The Kennedy group is already creating distance by having one of the Kennedy sisters publicly assail Hart for his attempt to immitate JFK. Finally, Hart carries much baggage. *Time* magazine is reportedly preparing a "sleaze" story detailing Hart's extramarital escapades and his cavorting with actor Warren Beatty.

The majority of the Kennedy machine now backing Hart may accede to a second- or third-ballot Mondale victory if they believe Reagan is unbeatable in November. But if a foreign-policy or economic disaster occurs by the time of the convention, a Kennedy draft is probable. Already a small "Draft Kennedy" movement has begun in Wisconsin under the watchful eye of Kennedy operative and former governor Patrick Lucy, John Anderson's running mate in 1980. And the required Kennedy rehabilitation campaign has already been initiated around a myth that Teddy's prayers by

his mother Rose's deathbed were responsible for her recovery.

Robert Strauss is meanwhile said to be prepared to promote the brokered candidacy of New York Gov. Mario Cuomo. Extremely close to key Italian-American labor leaders of the AFL-CIO, Cuomo is a nominal supporter of Mondale. These forces have set the ground for a major defeat for Mondale in the important April 3 New York primary. Such a blow in a state Mondale is expected to win could be devastating.

Some new cards in the game

The Kennedy-Strauss-Harriman maneuvers and the unlikelihood of a Mondale first-ballot victory are encouraging the growth of an uncommitted caucus, as local "courthouse" and state machines—already surfaced in the South Carolina and Mississippi primaries—sense their chance for real power in a brokered convention. Jesse Jackson is now campaigning on his ability to be the power broker at the convention for the black community; many others will follow.

As the March 20 Boston and Chicago vote results for candidates running on Lyndon LaRouche's platform (see article, page 55) begin to register with Washington powerbrokers and Charles Manatt's Democratic National Committee, the explosive, uncontrolled nature of what might occur in San Francisco will hit. If LaRouche's first primary effort in the April 10 Pennsylvania race even matches the March 20 results of "LaRouche ticket" candidates then everyone banking on being a player in San Francisco will face a new game.

Already the DNC and others have sent out a frantic message to prohibit the certification of LaRouche delegates to the convention. For in the configuration shaping up for July, the LaRouche factor could be decisive.