

House GOP leadership no longer functions

by Carl Osgood

The attempt from within the House Republican Conference to unseat Newt Gingrich (Ga.) as Speaker of the House, revealed by *The Hill* newspaper on July 16, has paralyzed the House Republican Party. While the turmoil may have temporarily subsided, the ideological fault lines that led to the plot against Gingrich, including differences over how confrontational the Republicans should be in their drive to tear down the U.S. government, including the Presidency, have not been closed.

Republicans held a much-ballyhooed “healing session” on July 23, and everybody came out of the meeting with nothing but words of reconciliation. Prior to that meeting, there had been much talk of unseating Majority Leader Dick Armey (Tex.), who vociferously denied any role in the plot, and pointed (without naming names) at other members of the leadership, including Majority Whip Tom DeLay (Tex.) and Conference Chairman John Boehner (Ohio). Dissidents, led by Lindsay Graham (S.C.), threatened to bring a privileged resolution to the floor calling on Gingrich to step down. But they were more furious at Armey and Boehner, who, they insisted, were behind the plot until Armey backed out at the last minute.

At the meeting, DeLay reportedly came the closest to confessing that he had attempted to overthrow Gingrich. He could be heard in an audiotape leaked to Fox News, saying, “Toward the end of the [July 10 meeting with the dissidents], they put me on the spot and they asked me if I would vote with them to vacate the [Speaker’s] chair, and I said I would.” DeLay described his actions as “a serious mistake in judgment.”

The row has weakened the Republican Conference. The renegades have backed down from their rebellion, for now, but the 105th Congress is barely halfway through its first session, and Armey, DeLay, and Boehner are no longer in Gingrich’s inner circle. Instead, Gingrich will be relying more on those who remained loyal to him during the crisis, including Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Archer (Tex.), Republican Policy Committee Chairman Christopher Cox (Calif.), and Chris Shays (Conn.), among others. Newly added to Gingrich’s inner circle are Jennifer Dunn (Wash.) and Deborah Price (Ohio), recently elected to the positions of conference vice-chair and secretary, respectively.

Back in January, after Gingrich had been ordered by the House to pay a \$300,000 fine for ethics violations, Sen.

Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.) was quoted by *U.S. News and World Report* saying that Gingrich “thinks we’ve got the parliamentary system and he’s the prime minister—that we over in the Senate are just a bunch of House of Lords and the President is ceremonial.” The behavior of the rest of the House GOP since the beginning of the 104th Congress, betrays the fact that the mentality that Hollings identified, is widespread, and explains why the ideological fault lines that separate the different Republican factions can never be permanently mended.

The GOP’s baby-boomer problem

Lyndon LaRouche described the source of the GOP’s problem, in an interview with the radio program “EIR Talks” on July 23. LaRouche identified the British intelligence takeover, through the Mont Pelerin Society and the Jay Lovestone-Trotskyist networks, of the Republican Party in the 1970s, in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal. The result of this, combined with the up and coming “baby-boomer fanatics” entering the party from the college campus population of the 1960s, was “a complete paradigm shift in the base of the Republican Party,” he said. LaRouche pointed to the fact that the political mentality of the baby-boomer generation was shaped by the post-industrial ideology.

“Now,” LaRouche said, “because the Republicans do not have a mass base in the productive section of society (not much of one, that is), among trade unionists, for example, typical of that, because they’re anti-labor, generally, and especially so nowadays; these are the freebie people, the people who want to get something for nothing on the stock market, that sort of thing, or on the mutual funds market or in derivatives, that kind of thing. These are the quasi-criminal tendencies of somebody looking for something for nothing, as in speculation on futures. So this mentality has destroyed the base of the Republican Party, which used to have a large base in farmers and all kinds of constituencies like that; industries—we wiped out industry, we wiped out banks, that is, real banks, local banks, like savings banks, and savings and loan banks. Those were all wiped out. So, the traditional constituencies of the more serious, patriotic hard core of the Republican Party, are out of business, either because they’re aged, or because they’ve been put out of business, in bankruptcy, by economic developments.

“That party just doesn’t function now. There are still a few people; I think the passing of Dole from political life, who was one of the—Bob wasn’t perfect in politics, but Bob was institutional: He wouldn’t destroy the government, the way a Gingrich or people like that would do, in order to make an ideological point. And the problem is, you’ve got too many people in the Republican Party who are weak; who still have some sense of institutional values, but they’re weak, and they capitulate all too quickly, to the rampages of a madman like Gingrich, or one of the people around Gingrich who are even crazier than he is.”