

RIPON FORUM

Report on
Cuba

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EDITORIAL: THE GOP

CHOOSING A NEW REPUBLICAN CHAIRMAN

The battle for the soul and future of the Republican Party has centered on a replacement for Mary Louise Smith as chairman of the Republican National Committee. That election will have symbolic as well as practical consequences for the Republican Party.

Ripon believes that the Republican National Committee should recognize that the symbolic importance of the office extends beyond the ideological background and rhetorical flourish that the new chairman may possess. Ripon therefore proposes that the new chairman be held to the same standards of financial disclosure as are currently required of members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Basically, a potential Republican national chairman would be required to disclose:

- interests worth more than \$5,000 or income over \$1,000 from companies doing a substantial federal business or subject to federal regulation.
- sources of any income for services exceeding \$5,000 annually;
- any capital gain from a single source exceeding \$5,000;
- any honorarium over \$300; and
- names of creditors owed \$10,000 or more.

Ripon has two motives for this proposal. First, the Republican Party must demonstrate to the electorate its devotion to ethical government. It has to do so visibly, not merely rhetorically. By placing such requirements on the highest official in the party, the GOP would be making a tangible statement of its principles. Because such disclosure is not always comfortable for the official involved, the action would carry more weight than the usual

public relations messages on official morality.

Second, the GOP has fallen to such a low estate that it cannot afford the embarrassment of future disclosures about the finances of its



national chairman. Without a Republican President and with presidential elections four years away, the new national GOP chairman is going to be fair game for political investigative reporters. The loyalties of Republicans have been put to sufficient tests in recent years without any new discomfiture.

The election of a new national chairman has been a contest between those who favor a "spokesman" and those who favor a "technician." Conservatives have split their influence by dividing themselves between advocates of John Connally and Ronald Reagan. Human Events has strongly backed Reagan, for example, while the southern GOP chairmen have supported Connally for the post. According to Mississippi GOP National Committeeman Clarke Reed, the GOP needs "someone to articulate the loyal opposition position...and none of this technician jazz."

Reagan's support was undercut both by southern GOP support for Connally and by the candidacy of Utah GOP Chairman Richard Richards, who has the overwhelming support of western state chairmen. The idea of a "spokesman" as GOP national chairman was unlikely to sit well either with moderates who recognize that the "spokesman" is not likely to articulate their views and with party leaders in general who have little desire to elevate a competitor for the attention of the national media. Since neither Reagan nor Connally were inclined to rule themselves out as 1980 presidential contenders, opposition to them was bound to develop. Even Ronald Reagan finally suggested that the party's leader ought to be a technician. Reagan certainly would hardly be gratified by Connally's assumption of the post.

The prospect of a fight and an embarrassing defeat was enough to discourage both Reagan and Connally. Although two conservatives are still mentioned---Richards and former Tennessee Sen. Bill Brock---attention has shifted to the moderate and moderate-conservative technicians such as Indiana State GOP Chairman Thomas Milligan, Ohio State GOP Chairman Kent McGough, former Ford Campaign Manager James Baker, and Wisconsin GOP National Committeeman Ody Fish. The relative success of Indiana's GOP in this year's elections has been a particularly good recommendation for Milligan in a party starved for success.

Meanwhile, the Republican Women's Task Force has sought to elevate the discussion above the level of a personality contest by directing a questionnaire to prospective candidates for national chairman. The task force's inquiry focuses on the candidate's ideas on increasing GOP voter registration, attracting special voter groups, dealing with auxiliary party organizations, appointing a co-chairman for the Republican National Committee, selecting a new Rule 29 Committee, and backing the Equal Rights Amendment. The idea of knowing what a prospective chairman might do in the post is logical---but undoubtedly will continue to take a back seat to arguments over the kind of person that various party factions would like or not like in that spot.

Regardless of the outcome, the fight has made it clear that neither Reagan nor Connally will be able to take over the GOP with impunity. Conservatives may predominate in the party, but their ranks are not monolithic and their stars are not devoid of jealousy. Even columnist William Safire rejected Connally and Reagan as a GOP leader, urging instead "somebody in his 40s; articulate, well-versed in the issues, with experience in government; acceptable party-wide; good debater, good organizer." Safire's choices were Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld; Washington Gov. Daniel Evans, and Sen. Brock---with special emphasis on Brock.

In retrospect, four years hence, the chairmanship battle may be remembered less for its outcome than for the emergence of a split between western and southern conservatives, between Reagan conservatives and Connally conservatives. At the moment, the West is on the ascendancy, having increased its share of the 1980 convention delegates three percent while the South's portion of the delegates dropped three percent. If the two regions continue to adopt competing candidates, their predominance in the party may drop appreciably. ■

RENEW TODAY

In one of his recent columns, Ronald Reagan wrote, "What's ahead for the GOP? Some editorial writers are calling ---as they regularly do---for it to become 'more progressive' (that is, more like the liberal side of the Democratic Party)." Reagan's conclusions, as usual, are a bit exaggerated, but in this case, they were close to the mark. Many editorialists were warning against the fervent hope of Reagan's supporters that the GOP could be turned into a homogenous conservative association:

Chicago Tribune: "The Republican Party is not in a position to give up practical politics in favor of ideological purity. If it did, we would have only one party in the business of winning elections---or, in other words, one party. The national chairmanship does not have much political power, but it is a focal point that serves to direct a party's efforts, and those efforts are in large part directed toward the specific task of placing its own members in elective office.

"We urge the Republicans to choose a chairman who is a capable political technician, who knows the mechanics of party politics and uses them with skill, and who knows also that elections are won by winning a majority of voters, not by alienating all but a fervent few.

"The Republican Party will not have much of a future if it decides that the business of winning votes is beneath its dignity."

Miami Herald: "...the choice of a successor to Mrs. Smith is a crucial test for Republicans. With no incumbent President to serve as spokesman, the party is going to need a chairman who can fill that role and yet also give the long hours and hard work needed to rebuild the party organization at the grass-roots level.

"It can be done. Political parties are remarkably resilient, especially in these days of shifting loyalties. Often parties have been pronounced dead only to revive and thrive. But if they are to come back, Republicans must understand that no American political party has yet ridden back into power by deliberately excluding large numbers of voters in the name of ideological purity."

Minneapolis Tribune: "Republicans can't afford the luxury of an ideological purity that narrows their base of support. And the country can't afford the eclipse of the Republican Party. 'Well, it seems we have some choices,' says [Minnesota GOP Chairman Chuck] Slocum. 'We can move to action, to revise, renovate and reform our party so we can win elections. Or we can become a permanent minority, counting on a diminishing base of support and winning only the hard-core areas.'"

Washington Post: As many veteran party leaders seem to recognize, what they do need is a chairman who is less concerned with personal image-building and ideology and more adept at candidate recruitment and grass-roots organizational work. A recent Baltimore Sun editorial put it well in a headline: 'Happiness is Bliss.' There may be no now who quite equals Ray Bliss, the master organizer from Ohio who pulled the GOP together after its disastrous defeats in 1964. There are, however, several skilled professionals who have not been badly scarred by factional fights. To complement such a nuts-and-bolts manager, some kind of council of party elders could be set up; President Ford, for one, seems interested in this approach.

"In terms of public perceptions of the GOP, the structural details are less meaningful than the spirit in which the party now proceeds. So far, the post-election pragmatism is encouraging. After all, the only way to win more elections is to get more votes. A real Republican comeback can be achieved only by reaching out, rather than perpetuating the self-indulgent squabbles and exclusionary attitudes of the past."

Philadelphia Inquirer: "For the Republican Party now to turn to its ideological extreme for leadership, we believe, would be a grave error, and one which could lead to the ultimate extinction of the party as a major national force. We believe the effect of that would serve no one---for healthy political competition is the wellspring of progressive government.

"There are any number of moderate, progressive Republicans available to fill Mrs. Smith's chair. We urge the members of the National Committee to choose one of them, and not to flee to the party's conservative fringe."

Parsons (Kansas) Sun: "The conservatives, who carried Ronald Reagan's banner in the primaries, seem bent on seizing control even if the action is self-destructive. Many in this group seem more impressed with party control than in winning elections.

"The Republicans are a minority party, by a large margin. Any attempt to push the party further to the right would certainly alienate many independent voters, if not some from the left wing of the GOP itself.

"A minority party doesn't turn away prospective friends unless its impulses are suicidal."

Dallas Morning News: "What the GOP must do, surely, is to proclaim itself the tribune and champion of the middle class---the long-suffering middle class, which sees freedom, civility and economic stability fast disappearing. The Republicans ought to be frankly and unashamedly middle class. Why apologize? That is where the grievances are, and where the votes are as well.

"To do this, the Republicans will have to change their strategy. Championing free enterprise is splendid, but it has got to be shown that free enterprise is for small businessmen as much as for corporations, for union men as well as country-clubbers. It has got to be shown, moreover, that free enterprise has to do not just with profits but with freedom---that indivisible treasure which shrinks whenever a Congress, a bureaucrat, or a judge dictates arbitrarily to a shopkeeper or, for that matter, a corporation president."

Detroit News: "If serious about achieving a New Look, the Republican Party must first start shaping and explaining its policies more effectively in terms of people. Since the advent of the New Deal, the GOP has let the Democrats monopolize the 'people issues.' Though they may not always produce, the Democrats always talk in terms of humanity. The Republicans need to learn to talk about human beings too.

"What are people concerned about? About jobs, health, fair treatment, good housing, safe neighborhoods. Blacks and whites have the same interests so politicians need not think in terms of special attitudes in order to win the support of blacks---which the GOP must win...if it expects to get ahead.

"Location, not any basically-different interests, distinguishes the black problem. The location is the blighted inner area of the big American city. Neither Democrats nor Republicans have yet discovered how to bring jobs, good health, equal opportunity, better housing and safety to the inner city. But at least the Democrats talk about doing so.

"A few Republicans do, too, and they need to gain the attention of their party. For the inner city constitutes a major political battleground of our times."

The Detroit News went on to cite for Republican consideration, Gov. William Milliken's suggestion that the federal government encourage industry to relocate and expand in central cities through tax incentives.

Detroit Free Press: "But there is a great opportunity for the Republican Party, if it will but shake off some of its old class feelings, some of the narrowness of its concerns. Reform does not necessarily mean spending more. Labor unions do not necessarily have a claim on liberalism or on the ideals of brotherhood. The fight against inflation, in the proper perspective, has a tremendously broad appeal. In Michigan, the Republican Party may not be ideologically pure enough to satisfy the neanderthals, but it is successful. And furthermore, it has been able to exercise a healthy influence on the direction of state policy.

"But the Republican Party nationally simply must, as it own pollster pointedly advised the party elders this week, reach out to blacks. The realities of politics today dictate a biracial, broad-based appeal. The old hope that prejudice and resistance to change would drive the whites of the South into the arms of the Republican Party, which was the basis of Richard Nixon's southern strategy, did not turn out to be quite so much a sure thing. The increasing enfranchisement of blacks has changed the equation radically."

Pittsburgh Press: "What the GOP needs now is a political technician who will work to reassemble the party, recruit attractive candidates for 1978 and reach out to blacks, youths and other groups that have felt unwanted in Republican circles. The last thing the party needs is a narrow ideological leadership, one desiring a 'pure' conservative membership.

COMMENTARY: CUBA

THE RIPON EMISSARY'S REPORT

by Richard W. Rahn

To the Ripon Society:

In early October of this year, seven members of the Ripon Society traveled to Cuba as guests of its government. Before recounting the details of the trip, let me briefly summarize my conclusions for those of you who are impatient readers: The Castro regime has had some successes: most notably, the extension of virtually free basic medical care to all segments of the population; the development of an extensive primary and secondary school system; and the virtual elimination of illiteracy. For these successes the Cuban people have paid a high price: the loss of most of their basic freedoms and a stagnant economy.

Now, the details. During the late spring, I was approached by an official of the Cuban Mission to the United Nations, who said the Cuban government was interested in having a delegation of current and former Ripon officers visit Cuba as its guests. I explained we were strong advocates of a free market economy, limited government, civil liberties and individual human rights. He said he understood our positions but felt that Cuba had something to show us. I agreed to organize a group and find a suitable date.

After many letters and phone calls with members of the Society, the Cuban UN Mission and the U.S. Department of State, our group's visit was set up. The Cubans have been inviting numerous assorted groups of American citizens to visit Cuba on the belief that Cuba has been unjustly treated in the American press. The Cubans believe that they can obtain a more sympathetic response from American policy makers through such private visits. All members of Ripon's entourage were widely traveled. Professionally, the group included two attorneys, two journalists, a public relations executive, a builder/real estate developer, and an economist.

The individuals in our group arrived in Jamaica on October 5 in preparation for connecting with Cubana Airlines Flight #554 on October 6. After arriving at Kingston Airport October 6 and checking our bags, we were notified our flight would be delayed due to "equipment troubles." After a four-hour wait, I was

called to the phone. My secretary in Washington informed me that the plane on which we were scheduled had just crashed en route from Barbados to Kingston. It has since been reported that the plane was blown up by anti-Castro terrorists based in Venezuela. At 1 a.m. the following day, a replacement aircraft delivered us to Havana's airport.

Once in Cuba, we received consistently first-class treatment. Our accommodations were fine and the food was excellent. The seven of us were provided with three cars and drivers as well as four government officials and/or interpreters for most of our stay. Although we had some difficulty dealing with hard-line communists who persistently expressed a keen interest in destroying America's free enterprise system, we nevertheless found these same individuals to be pleasant, helpful and gracious.

Initially, we developed a mutually agreeable schedule with the Cuban officials on the individuals to be placed on our itinerary. On the evening of our arrival, we were taken to a theater for a private showing of propaganda films. Fortunately, after over an hour of rather offensive and tedious cinema, a power failure blessedly abbreviated the entertainment. We had to be led from the theater with flashlights and matches. Many things seem not to work well in Cuba. For instance, in my hotel room, I could obtain only hot water. In fact, one morning the water was so hot that I was unable to take a shower and even the toilet bowl had steaming hot water in it. Many of the rooms did not have toilet seats, including mine.

The trip's most interesting incident occurred after we had been in Cuba two days. One afternoon, as we were standing in the hotel lobby chatting with our hosts, one of them mentioned that they had preserved in ice the body of an American U-2 pilot who had been shot down 13 years before. They asked us if we would like to take the body back to the United States, saying our country had never claimed the body. Not certain whether the offer was sincere or fake, we indicated we would take the proposal up with the State Department on our return. As the Associated Press reported the story on our return:

Denver attorney John F. Head said the group was told the body could be reclaimed and that Washington knows it exists.

According to the information the Americans received, the pilot's name was 'Johnson' and his &-2 was shot down in 1963, Head said

Head said he and the six others in the group from the liberal Republican Ripon Society tried repeatedly to get the Cubans to let them see the body during a visit this month.

After being told several times that a viewing would be arranged, Head said he was refused on ground that any action concerning the corpse would have to be on a government-to-government basis.

In Washington, a spokesman for the State Department said the only known U-2 incident in Cuba concerned a plane piloted by Maj. Rudolf Anderson, Jr., of Greenville, S.C. Anderson's spy-plane was shot down by surface-to-air missiles during the Cuban missile crisis, on October 27, 1972, and his body was returned and buried two months later.

Published reports from that era showed, however, that a U-2, a high-flying gliderlike jet reconnaissance plane, was reported lost in the Caribbean on November 20, 1973. That pilot, Capt. Joseph G. Hyde, Jr., of Lagrange, Ga., was not found, but pieces of his aircraft were found on November 21 in the Gulf of Mexico, 40 miles northwest of Key West, Fla., and 180 miles north of Cuba. Two weeks later, Air Force investigators said they ruled out the chance the plane was shot down.

Head said an interpreter assigned to the group, Juan Ortega, mentioned the preserved body during a conversation over cocktails in the presence of a foreign ministry officer.

The lawyer said the subject came up during a discussion of how the Ripon Society members could help Cuba in the United States. "They were probing the depth of our influence in this country," Head said.

"The conversation developed to where we were saying, 'Look, if Cuba wants to normalize relations with... the United States, it would be a very worthwhile public relations gesture if you let us take prisoners back with us.'"

The reference was to eight Americans known to be in Cuban jails.

Ortega then said, Head reported: "There's one prisoner down here you can see that nobody wants. He's in

a block of ice. In fact, you can take his body home with you."

The next day, Premier Fidel Castro blamed the earlier destruction of our scheduled plane on the Central Intelligence Agency. After our return, the Cuban government denied the existence of the body. Why they engaged in such an elaborate charade remains a mystery.

At another point, we were allowed to visit the Havana Psychiatric Hospital. The Cubans are very proud of the institution---apparently for good cause. Before the revolution, it was virtually a chamber of horrors. It is now attractive and well maintained. The inmates are well treated and are engaged in an extensive work-therapy program. Drugs, however, are used liberally to keep the patients calm and some are admitted on the basis of "anti-social behavior." In Cuba, anti-social behavior can be interpreted as not being committed to the revolution.

Traveling about Cuba, one has a great sense of deja vu as a result of the large number of pre-1959 American automobiles. It is amazing how many are still running; large numbers are custom-built hybrids.

On several occasions we ate at very fine restaurants. Although we were told that the restaurants were kept open for the workers, at the times we dined, we were virtually the only diners being served. Despite this fact, the restaurants appeared to be fully operational and fully staffed.

One afternoon was spent at the University of Havana where we were lectured for about two and a half hours by the vice minister of higher education. The essence of his message was that the bourgeois capitalistic countries were doomed to failure while the socialist proletariat would eventually conquer all. At one point, he said: "Minorities have no rights whatsoever; only the proletariat majority have any rights." He stated with satisfaction that "over 90 percent of the faculty of the University of Havana left after the revolution" because they were "bourgeois professors." With a laugh he said, "Not all of them left of their own free will."

Last year, the Cubans adopted a new constitution that is rather oddly written from a western democratic point of view. For example, in the introduc-

tion, there is a mention of the "eternal friendship and help and cooperation of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries" as well as the "leadership of Fidel Castro." Article 52 states:

Citizens have freedom of speech and of the press in keeping with the objectives of a socialist society. Material conditions for the exercise of that right are provided by the fact that the press, radio, television, movies, and other organs of mass media are state or social property and can never be private property. This assures their use as the exclusive service of the working people and the interest of society. The law regulates the exercise of these freedoms.

In the middle of our visit---on October 10---Cuba held its first national election since the revolution. It appeared that the candidates were seeking election to bodies equivalent to a city council or county commission. It was not at all clear, however, what real power these newly-elected representatives would have. Four candidates from each election district were selected by the local party organization. Candidates were not allowed to campaign because under previous regimes, candidates had not been truthful in their campaign statements. Therefore, in order to prevent exaggerations, candidates were not allowed to say anything. The electorate made their selection solely on the basis of the candidates' biographies, which were posted near the polling place.

We spent part of election day with the minister of justice, traveling from polling place to polling place. He and others had emphasized the importance of these elections. Finally, we could not resist asking the obvious question: "Why, if elections are so important, did it take 17 years to get around to having one?" He did not hesitate, quickly responding, "It took us this period of time to develop the proper degree of revolutionary consciousness in our people."

Economic problems are the most serious difficulties facing Cuba. For the first decade after the revolution, there was no real economic growth. There was widespread economic mismanagement as a result of total nationalization of all sectors of the economy. From 1970 through 1975, real per capita income did improve at a modest rate. Much of this increase was due to the rising world price of sugar, which

reached a high of \$.65 per pound in 1974. It has since fallen to \$.075 per pound while the production cost stands at 13-15 cents per pound.

During the early 1970s, Cuba received a number of loans and trade credits, not only from other socialist countries, but also from such Western nations as Sweden, Finland, Norway, Canada, the Netherlands, Argentina, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Belgium. These loans and credits, coupled with a high sugar price, enabled the Cubans to import substantial quantities of foreign goods, including automobiles, food stuffs, clothing, and other consumer products. As a result of the sugar price decline, Cuba is now virtually bankrupt of foreign exchange. Thus, it has had to stop all nonessential imports and is having difficulty meeting payments on the earlier loans. While Cuba exports some nickel, shellfish and citrus products, about 80 percent of its exports come from sugar or sugar-derived products.

Although Cubans continue to denounce the United States' former economic influence on the island's economy, Cuba is now much more dependent on the Soviet Union than it ever was on the United States. The Soviets, for example, import about 45 percent of the Cuban sugar crop and pay about \$.30 per pound for this privilege---more than triple the current world sugar price. On the other hand, the Cubans import all their petroleum from the Soviet Union and much of their machinery. Though at first glance it appears that the Soviets are giving the Cubans a mammoth economic subsidy, on closer examination, it is apparent that the profits the Soviets receive on their petroleum and other exports equal or exceed the Cuban profit on Soviet sugar sales.

The dearth of merchandise in Cuban stores is striking. The Cuban citizen needs a ration coupon to buy almost any necessity---particularly food and clothing. As a result, the ration coupons have actually become a substitute form of money. And in turn, there is a very active black market in ration coupons. The average worker will get coupons, for example, enabling him to buy only two short sleeve shirts a year.

The Cubans receive relatively high wages, but there are still very substantial wage differentials in the country. The doctors at the Havana Psychiatric

Hospital receive 600 pesos a month while the nurses receive only 150 pesos a month and the orderlies about 100 pesos a month. (The official exchange rate is 1 peso = \$1.20 U.S. The black market exchange rate is approximately 1 peso = \$.17 U.S.) Workers are charged only six percent of their income for housing. By giving relatively high wages and yet providing few goods or services to purchase, the government induces an artificially high rate of savings. Workers are encouraged to open savings accounts in the Bank of Cuba. These savings accounts pay no interest and appear to be a substantial source of both operating and capital funds for the government.

The Cubans we met were very interested in the possibility of ending the American trade embargo and reestablishing normal trade relations with Cuba. I came to the conclusion, however, that even if we did end the embargo and establish normal trade, there would be little immediate commerce. The Cubans lack hard currency with which to purchase American goods and there is relatively little that Americans would wish to buy from the Cubans. Given the world and American sugar surplus, it is unlikely we would buy any from Cuba. Any American purchases of Cuban nickel, shellfish or cigars would be insubstantial in absolute terms.

Moreover, it is unlikely that Cuba would soon become a major destination for American tourists. The island lacks a sufficient number of first class hotels, particularly in resort locations, and it has lost much of its earlier tourist infrastructure. Given the restrictions, I would predict that the average American tourist would find

a Cuban holiday to be rather boring.

As to whether the United States ought to lift the embargo and establish normal trade, I have concluded that we ought not to do so on a unilateral basis. If we now made such a unilateral move, the United States would gain little while the Cubans would gain a psychological and economic victory. Since the Cubans are vitally interested in lifting the embargo, it would be in the United States' best interests to attempt to negotiate a formal agreement covering some of the following factors:

First, an agreement to limit Cuba's intervention in Puerto Rico and foreign countries.

Second, an agreement concerning the \$1.8 billion due American individuals and firms as a result of Cuba's nationalization of property without compensation.

Third, an agreement concerning the issue of political prisoners, the right of free immigration and other human rights issues.

In summary, since the Cubans are still strongly hostile to the American form of government and economic system and since they have far more to gain from improved relations with us than we do with them, we ought to surrender what little leverage we have. If, on the other hand, the Cubans begin to take positive action on the above-mentioned issues, we probably would be wise to respond in kind. The histories of the Cuban and American people have long been interrelated. There are some encouraging signs that the Castro regime is becoming more responsible and moderate. We ought to reinforce these tendencies with the goal of eventual elimination of the barriers between our two peoples. ■

Contributor Note: Richard Rahn is executive director of the American Council on Capital Formation and a former managing director of the Ripon Society. He made his last inspection tour of Cuba in 1959.

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