

commentary

from other pens...

Bush sees a deal, but does N. Korea?

President Bush has vowed not to negotiate with North Korea but he sees the outlines of a deal that would break the current impasse with Pyongyang: U.S. assistance in exchange for denuclearization.

Bush said he could resurrect a "bold initiative" for economic benefits for North Korea if it dismantles its nuclear programs. The North would give up an opportunity to have as many as six bombs in the next few months from its present level, believed to be two.

The State Department had been willing to present the aid program to the North Koreans last year but shelved it after learning the North had begun work on a uranium-based nuclear program.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said today he thinks the administration's policy is wrong.

"I have no problem with negotiations but those negotiations should take place after the North Koreans abide by and enforce the agreement they made before," he said on CBS's "The Early Show."

"Let's not go back to that same agreement, which would only encourage them to pursue a policy which so far has been very successful for them," he said.

As the poor man of Northeast Asia, North Korea is in desperate need of outside assistance but says it is more interested in working out a nonaggression pact with the United States.

The administration is cool to the idea. Lately Secretary of State Colin Powell has gone out of his way to reassure Pyongyang that Washington has no hostile intent.

Two Sundays ago, Powell appeared on five television talk shows to say the United States harbored no hostile intentions toward the North, even promising not to use military force. This was a commitment President Clinton never made during his two terms in office.

Powell's peace gestures did not impress Pyongyang, and he reflected his disappointment days later, saying, "Apparently, they want more than a passing statement." The North appears to be digging in its heels in support of a nonaggression pact.

If the United States continues to say no to negotiations, analysts say the North could rely on its nuclear arsenal as a deterrent or as a lucrative export. If Washington says yes, they say, Pyongyang could bargain away its armaments in exchange for an economic wind-fall, compliments of Washington. Or so it believes.

The nuclear weapons program is not the only U.S. concern with North Korea. U.S. officials say the N. Koreans are world class counterfeiters of U.S. currency. The officials are aware of this because North Korean diplomats occasionally get caught crossing international boundaries with suitcases full of the illicit greenbacks.

Aside from Pyongyang's nuclear program, perhaps the biggest U.S. concern is the North's sales of missiles to any interested buyer.

This trade was brought into sharp focus last month when Spanish warships seized a Singapore-registered ship carrying at least 15 short- and medium-range North Korean Scud missiles in the Arabian Sea. The U.S. military took charge of the ship, but then allowed it to sail on, its cargo in tact, to its destination, Yemen.

White House press secretary Ari Fleischer said, "We have no choice but to obey international law. "What Yemen has done ... does not provide a threat to the United States."

Some U.S. officials were appalled at the decision, contending that a substantial intelligence agency effort to track down the ship was squandered away on highly questionable legal grounds. A senior official said this week the next time North Korean missiles are found aboard a vessel on the high seas, they will be confiscated.

The North's missile exporting program has troubled successive administrations for years. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld calls North Korea the "single biggest proliferator of ballistic missiles" and said its role is "a danger to the world."

EDITOR'S NOTE—George Gedda has covered foreign affairs for The Associated Press since 1968.



GEORGE W. and the DEMS BOTH STRUT THEIR STIMULUS PLANS Daschle's exit leaves 'talent primary' open

Sen. Thomas Daschle's (S.D.) decision not to run for president has set off a scramble among other Democratic contenders for the allegiance of the talented corps of political operatives who were planning to work on the Senate leader's campaign.

Daschle was set to run at least equal to the other four top contenders in the so-called "talent primary" with a team headed by former White House Chief of Staff John Podesta and former Deputy Chief of Staff Steve Richetti. Others on the prospective Daschle team would have included former White House aide Ron Klain, former Senate staffers Joel Johnson and Anita Dunn, and Steve Hildebrand, who ran then-Vice President Al Gore's Iowa campaign in 2000.

On Tuesday, within minutes after Daschle aborted plans to announce his candidacy this weekend in South Dakota and head out for a tour of early primary states, other candidates and their top aides started making recruiting calls to the Daschle team. Despite rumors of decisions, it's not clear which of the other candidates will pick up members of the Daschle squad.

Some are, in effect, "interviewing" Sens. John Kerry (Mass.), John Edwards (N.C.), Joe Lieberman (Conn.) and Rep. Dick Gephardt (Mo.) with the idea of making a choice. Others may join the ranks of the "I'll help whoever asks" club, which includes several former high-level Clinton administration officials, especially foreign policy aides.

While the "talent primary" is a key part of the buildup toward the actual caucus and primary season now just over a year away, other "primaries" are under way as well.

Lieberman seems to be well ahead in the "ideas primary," having beaten his rivals with proposals on foreign and economic policy and homeland security. A former chairman of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council, Lieberman identifies himself as "pro-business," but his criticisms of President Bush's economic and environmental plans have been as harsh as any liberal's. Edwards is striving mightily to catch up to Lieberman on the ideas front, issuing a stream of position papers, especially criticizing Bush from the right on



morton kondracke

• commentary

homeland security.

Edwards was leading in the "press primary," having received the most glowing coverage prior to his Jan. 2 announcement of his presidential exploratory committee. The coverage lost a bit of its glow, however, when the press, in response to Edwards' endless repetitions that he was the "champion of regular folks," called attention to his status as a millionaire former trial lawyer with limited political experience. Still, the sheer volume of coverage — and Edwards' quick start — seems to have boosted him in the polls to almost equal name recognition with better-known candidates like Kerry, Lieberman and Gephardt.

All of the top four contenders are expected to run about even in the all-important "money primary." Each is expected to be able to raise between \$15 million and \$20 million this year.

Edwards has a powerful fund-raising base among his fellow trial lawyers. Lieberman expects to raise money among fellow Jews, including many who regularly contribute to community charities but have not previously given to political candidates. Gephardt has a natural base among the nation's trade unions, but has also spent years raising money for House candidates, giving him a large donor list.

Kerry, Edwards and Gephardt will presumably have equal appeal among wealthy Hollywood liberals who are leery of Lieberman because of his virtues — centrism, hawkishness, and gutsy criticism of violence and sex in the media.

In the "talent primary," Gephardt and Kerry seem to have their starting teams assembled earliest.

Gephardt's includes his present and former chiefs of staff, Steve Elmendorf and Tom O'Donnell; California political consultant Bill Carrick; his 1988 Iowa campaign manager, Steve Murphy; and John Lapp, who ran Iowa

Gov. Tom Vilsack's campaign last year.

Kerry has Jim Jordan, outgoing executive director of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; media consultant Jim Margolis; legendary field organizer Michael Whouley; and his associate Jill Alper, who helped elect Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm last year.

Edwards' team includes Gore's 2000 New Hampshire operative Nick Baldick, and Steve Jarding, who managed Virginia Gov. Mark Warner's successful campaign in 2001.

Still unclear, according to Edwards' aides, is the role of liberal "message" guru Bob Shrum. Contrary to appearances, aides say, Edwards' claim to represent "regular folks" as opposed to "insiders" was not Shrum's formulation, but Edwards' own.

Lieberman has hired a pollster, Mark Penn, and Gore's former media strategist, Carter Eskew, but has yet to sign on a campaign manager. He is expected to get advice, too, from former White House Political Director Craig Smith and an informal "kitchen cabinet" that will include former Gore aide Tom Nides, DLO President Al From and former White House Communications Director Don Baer.

Of course, what counts in the end is not the talent primary or even the money primary, but the real primaries and caucuses, starting in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina.

Daschle's exit seemingly leaves the Iowa field open for Gephardt, who is from a neighboring state as well, but it also raises expectations for Gephardt's performance there. In fact, Kerry reportedly leads in some early private polls in Iowa and former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean is showing traction among liberal anti-war activists.

New Hampshire is thought to be Kerry's state, possibly with a challenge from Dean, but Lieberman plans to make a stand there by attracting independents who supported Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) in 2000.

I accept the conventional wisdom that there is no front-runner. But my bones tell me that Gephardt will prove the candidate closest to the Democratic Party's center of gravity.

Morton Kondracke is executive editor of Roll Call, the newspaper of Capitol Hill.

Sebelius struck non-partisan tone in address

TOPEKA — Kathleen Sebelius began her term as Kansas' chief executive with an inaugural address that took a nonpartisan tone, yet touched on her campaign's most important theme — education.

As the Democratic gubernatorial nominee, Sebelius made preventing cuts in state aid to public schools a key issue in defeating Republican Tim Shallenburger, saying she had an "absolute commitment" to public schools.

But her seven-minute inaugural address Monday focused mostly on the past and the state's pioneer founders. In doing so, she emphasized often-used images that appeal to Kansans of all political stripes.

"As Kansans, we take pride in our pioneer heritage and rugged independence, and yet Kansas is a special place where we accomplish great things working together," Sebelius said.

Reactions from Republican legislators indicated she made no significant missteps.

"That was a good speech, just right," said House Speaker Doug Mays, R-Topeka. "I don't think there were any partisan tones. It was nonpartisan rather than bipartisan."

The skies may have been clear when Sebelius took office Monday, but the state's finances remained darkly clouded. Some officials say Kansas is facing its worst crisis since the Great Depression.

Outgoing Gov. Bill Graves sliced \$119 million in spending financed by general tax dollars, out of a total budget of \$4.46 billion, to avoid a deficit on June 30. He also had the state withhold \$48 million to cities and counties.

The gap between expected general tax revenues and spending commitments could exceed \$1 billion over the next 18 months.



john hanna

• news analysis

But inaugural addresses aren't forums for hashing out budget issues or sounding pessimistic. Inaugurations celebrate the peaceful transfer of power and the pluck and can-do attitude often attributed to Kansans.

"We have a very proud heritage and history in Kansas," said former Gov. Mike Hayden, a Republican who is now serving as Sebelius' secretary of wildlife and parks. "It's very important to recognize that and call that into remembrance."

During her campaign, Sebelius touted her ability as a Democrat to work with Republicans, first as a House member, then as insurance commissioner. After her election, she promised to build coalitions.

Sebelius also said her election is a sign that voters expected her and legislators to get past their partisan labels and work together. Some Republicans agree.

"I think we'll need to be reminded of that throughout the session," said Senate Vice President John Vratil, R-Leawood.

Sebelius will need to build coalitions to govern effectively. She faces Republican majorities of 30-10 in the Senate and 80-45 in the House.

"She will be advocating a strong bipartisan-ship," Hayden said. "I think there'll be a lot of reaching across the aisle."

The political landscape facing Sebelius de-

manded a nonpartisan — or at least a bipartisan — tone in her first major speech as governor. She had said beforehand that she meant her address for a wide audience, the people, not just legislators. But some senators and House members were listening attentively nonetheless.

"I think she's struck a good tone," Vratil said. *Political Writer John Hanna has covered state government and politics for the Associated Press since 1987.*

berry's world



The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)
Member: Kansas Press Association
The Associated Press
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association
e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President
Tom Betz, Editor/Editorial
Managing Editor
Pat Schiefen, Copy Editor
Michelle Hawkins, Reporter
Sharon Corcoran, Society Editor
Eric Yonkey, Bill Wagoner, Advertising Sales
Skilar Boland, Adv. Production **Sheila Smith, Office Manager**

Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager
Richard Westfahl **Ron VanLoenen** **Judy McKnight**
Betty Morris **Mary Jo Tapparo** **Lana Westfahl**
Teneile Lovelace

nwkansas.com
N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services
(nbetz@nwkansas.com)
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.
Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.
TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnadv@nwkansas.com
The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.
SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$25; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$79. Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. By mail daily in Kansas, Colorado: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

The Sherman County Herald
Founded by Thomas McCants
1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR
Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey
1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers
Haynes Publishing Company