

the Golden Age of the Cold War. The "last good war" that united both liberals and conservatives was not World War II, but Korea, in which the U.S. got the United Nations to mobilize "the free world" against the Commie aggression by the North. And here was a war that was never really *finished*, was it? By harping on Korea, Slick Willie might sucker conservatives into reviving Cold War memories and rallying behind his foreign policy. North Korea, after all, is indisputably Commie as well as indisputably a dictatorship. And they're supposedly working on a possible nuclear weapon. Ye gods! Time for the U.S.A., which only has nuclear weapons strong enough to destroy the old Soviet Union many times over, to go into its old fear-and-trembling act. We cannot allow it! Nuclear strike!

The hope is, that this is largely hot air and hype. On the part of the U.S., that is. For the new "North Korean threat is, as usual, totally bogus. I refer the reader to a man who is probably the foremost expert on the Korean War, author of the massive two-volume *The Origins of the Korean War* (Princeton, U. Press.) This man, University of Chicago historian Bruce Cumings, is admittedly a leftist, but his analysis of the current phony "crisis" makes a great deal of sense (Bruce Cumings, "Crazy Kim", *The Nation*; Nov. 29).

Cumings points out that the latest "crisis" began with stories on the weekend of November 5-7, coinciding with the visit of our Defense Secretary, the klutz Les Aspin, to Seoul. Suddenly a spate of U.S. stories descended

upon us: crazed North Koreans were readying a nuclear bomb, they were forbidding access to international inspectors, and they were massing a full 70 percent of their troops on the South Korean border. All this, of course, was heavy with the implication that North Korea was imminently going to attack our beloved South; hence Clinton's "cease to exist as a nation," supposedly a warning that the U.S. would retaliate massively against a North Korean attack on the South, presumed to be coming at any moment. Major source of these stories: Pentagon officials flying home from Seoul along with Aspin.

The truth, as Cumings reveals, present us with a very different picture. First: more than 75 percent of North Korean troops have been "massed" near the South Korean border *ever since* the late 1970s, in response to new and threatening U.S. nuclear strategies! Second: North Korea has allowed numerous international inspections of its nuclear facility at Yongbyon, and is only balking at "special inspections" of a supposed nuclear waste dump for various technical and minor reasons. Aspin himself admitted that there is "no evidence that North Korea is now producing or reprocessing plutonium." A third aspect of this supposed crisis is that the North Korean forces would be led either by the "dying" despot Kim Il Sung or, even worse, by his "unstable" and "possible psychotic" son, Kim Jong Il.

But here again, the story about the younger Kim's alleged psychosis has been put about by South Korean intelligence for

the last quarter century, and the guy has apparently not flipped as yet.

The real story, Cumings shows, is that hysterical alarm about imminent North Korean attacks have been trumped up for the past four decades, usually accompanying one of two periodic events: the annual Congressional debates on defense appropriations; and talks between the Secretary of Defense and South Korean defense officials. This last scare is in the glorious US-S. Korean talk-crisis tradition. The last time a U.S. Defense Secretary visited South Korea was in November 1991, when Secretary Dick Cheney went to Seoul, and an anonymous U.S. defense official rattled the missiles: asserting that if North Korea "missed Desert Storm, this is a chance to catch a rerun."

Professor Cumings concludes his dash of realistic cold water on the latest hysteria on Korea: "No one knows the state of Kim Jong Il's mind, but if I were Kim I'd be a bit paranoid too, since on any given day there is someone in Washington willing to say that we might wipe his country off the face of the earth—and sometimes it's the President himself." ■

Health Insurance: The Clintons' Phony Populism by M.N.R.

Everyone knows that Co-President Hillary has launched a blistering and demagogic attack

on the "health insurance industry" for its very effective "Harry and Louise" TV ads sharply questioning some of the most dictatorial features of the Clinton Health Plan. La Rodham led the charge against the Health Insurance Association of America [HIAA], which sponsored the ads, posing as an enemy of that old devil, Big Business. The media, of course, have gone along with this ploy.

What no one is bothering to tell us, however, is that the HIAA is *not* the spokesman for Big Health Insurance. On the contrary, as Sam Hussein tells us in *The Nation* ("Hillary & Bill & Harry & Louise," Dec. 13), the real point is that the HIAA mainly consists of the small and medium-sized health insurance firms. The Big Five health insurers: Aetna, Prudential, Metropolitan Life, Cigna, and Travelers, have formed their *own* organization, The Alliance for Managed Competition, which essentially favors the Clinton Plan! For the Clinton Plan of course is grounded on the

concept of the "managed competition" of governmentally privileged HMOs, or health alliance cartels—the very reverse of the free competition that is more congenial to the smaller firms. Worse than that: the notorious Jackson Hole Group,

which formed the original draft of the Clinton Health Plan (albeit not quite as leftist as the final version), was mainly financed by these same Big Insurers (with the exception of Travelers).

Why do the Big Insurers favor the Clinton Plan? Because, notes Hussein, the "big insurers stand to gain from the Clinton plan's increased corporatization of health care since they have been rapidly buying HMOs, 45 percent of which are now owned by the eight largest insurance companies." And the HMOs, of course, are the essence of the managed competition-cartel plan. Hussein adds that the Big Insurers-HMO money for ads, which basically favor the Clinton Plan, "dwarf the moneys spent" by the HIAA, or, for that matter, by the Democrat and Republican parties.

More specifically, Patrick Woodall, of the Naderite Public Citizen, points out that "The managed competition-style plan the Clintons have chosen virtually guarantees that the five largest health insurance companies . . . will run the show in the health care system." And Robert Dreyfuss of Physicians for a National Health Program charges that "The Clintons are getting away with murder by portraying themselves as opponents of the insurance in-

dustry. It's only the small fry that oppose their plan. Under any managed competition scheme, the small ones will be pushed out of the market very quickly."

The fact that *The Nation* and these other critics of Clintonian health themselves favor an even worse and more openly socialistic health plan—"the single payer" scheme—does not damage the validity of their charges. Let's put it this way: the Clintons are not socialists in the single-minded sense of Marx or Lenin or Stalin. They are collectivists-cartellists, collectivists who want Big Government to be partners of Big Business and Big Labor in running the country—in the manner of corporate collectivists such as Italian fascism or the New Deal. To say that we don't need either model is a masterpiece of understatement.

Hussein's final sentence needs a lot of pondering: "The compelling question, then, is not who's behind 'Harry and Louise' but who's behind Bill and Hillary?" Who indeed? Don't we need a congressional investigation, armed with subpoena power, to find out? ■

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The Wizard of Wichita

by Joe Melton

Charles G. Koch (pronounced "Coke"), billionaire oilman out of Wichita, Kansas, has been the Donor and hence the effective ruler of the bulk of the Libertarian Movement for the past two decades. Koch is notor-