

National News

Abscam targets convicted after lame defense

Representatives John Murphy (D-N.Y.) and Frank Thompson (D-N.J.) were found guilty Dec. 3 on charges stemming from the Justice Department's "sting" against constituency-based politicians. They face up to 22 and 9 years respectively. Both will appeal.

The initial reaction of informed observers was to question the legal handling of the case, especially by Murphy's lawyer, Michael Tigar. The Murphy case was regarded as the weakest among the Abscam stings, with clear indications of entrapment, yet the defense did not argue entrapment.

A week ago, two convictions of Philadelphia congressmen were overruled by Federal Judge John Fullam because, he stated, the Justice Department had stretched federal statutes and entrapped the defendants. The Fullam decision was not brought up in the Murphy-Thompson trial.

Two U.S. policies mooted toward Europe

President-elect Reagan, in an interview with West Germany's popular weekly magazine *Quick* released Dec. 4, said that his top priority was to bring the U.S. economy back into shape; an America that is economically and politically strong will protect Europe better than any new treaties, he added. He said that he is willing to negotiate arms agreements with the U.S.S.R., however, and would meet with Leonid Brezhnev.

Asked about U.S. relations with West Germany, he commented that they have deteriorated under the Carter administration, particularly as the U.S. government was unable to deal with inflation. This will change beginning in January, Reagan declared. He said he did not think he would appoint Henry Kissinger as secretary of state, but that it was too soon to answer such questions.

Kissinger himself, visiting Bonn and

Paris, gave an interview to the Paris daily *Le Figaro* stating that the notion that economic development produces stability is false, as the Iran situation showed. Kissinger said that Europe cannot have its own independent Middle East policy, and threatened that a Euro-Arab preferential relationship on oil supplies would lead to the "destabilization of the region."

Democratic senators switch committees

Senate Democrats routinely ratified Majority Leader Robert Byrd as the next minority leader on Dec. 2. However, big changes occurred on the Senate committee front. Rather than choosing to become the ranking minority member on the committees they had chaired, most former chairmen have made another committee their point of emphasis.

Edward Kennedy, outgoing chairman of the Judiciary Committee, has chosen to become ranking member on the Labor and Human Resources Committee, widely viewed as an appropriate base for 1984 presidential race. Former Labor Committee chairman Harrison Williams of New Jersey is now ranking member on the Senate Banking Committee, and Joe Biden of Delaware will be ranking on the Judiciary Committee.

Senator calls for expanded space program

In a speech before the U.S. Senate Nov. 17, Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), demanded more funds to continue America's space program.

"This past week, on Nov. 11-13, the world was treated to a spectacle made possible only by an unsurpassed triumph of American science and technology. The resolution of the centuries-old mystery of Saturn's rings, the study of its atmosphere-shrouded giant moon, Titan, and the discovery of three new moons have allowed all mankind to share in an experience akin to those of Columbus, Ma-

gellan and other great explorers who have stood, for the first time at the frontiers of knowledge. This feat was possible because of American vision and commitment to the advancement of knowledge and understanding.

"A strong and vigorous civilian space exploration program like this puts the very best face of American science and industry forward to the world, and helps us maintain the engineering talent and industrial base that we would have to turn to in time of national emergency."

Thurmond warned that there are no further NASA programs planned beyond the late 1980s satellite probe of Jupiter. He called for new NASA programs to include sending cameras close to Halley's comet. "We can add the Halley intercept mission to our fiscal 1982 plans and once again affirm to the world in a spectacular and dramatic way that American leadership in high technology stands unsurpassed at the frontiers of knowledge."

New GOP leadership confirmed in Senate

Republican senators caucusing on Dec. 2 completed the initial stages of reorganizing the Senate. Howard Baker of Tennessee and Ted Stevens of Alaska were elected as majority leader and majority whip without opposition.

The only contest in the Republican Caucus was over the Conference chairmanship. Conservative Jim McClure of Idaho ran against Eastern moderate John Heinz. McClure, who ran for the post unsuccessfully in 1978, and handily beat the Pennsylvanian by a 33-20 vote. The Conference is the long-range policy-formulating body for Senate Republicans.

Heritage journal on environmentalism

In the latest issue of *Policy Review*, journal of the Washington-based Heritage

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Foundation, William Tucker writes that environmentalism is a "Tory phenomenon," basically an expression of "aristocratic conservatism." The movement is not fueled by "conspiracies," he writes, but by an alliance between "the good families" and the "college-educated, white-collar workers."

Tucker, who is a contributing editor of *Harper's* magazine, states that there is "a hard core of truth in the worries which environmentalists express. . . . Environmentalism without elitism is a legitimate goal of the American political system."

UAW to reaffiliate with AFL-CIO?

The United Autoworkers will act soon on a proposed reaffiliation with the AFL-CIO, UAW President Douglas Fraser has announced. The move is expected to spur ongoing merger talks between the UAW and the International Association of Machinists (IAM), an AFL-CIO affiliate. The autoworkers' union is also conducting preliminary negotiations with the United Rubberworkers.

The reaffiliation, coupled with the mergers, could fit in with efforts by Fraser and IAM chief William Winpisinger to push labor into a confrontationalist posture against the incoming Reagan administration. Fraser has on occasion threatened "class war" against what he terms "right-wing reaction."

Grain embargo's future still uncertain

The Carter administration's embargo against grain sales to the Soviet Union came under challenge as the Canadian government announced that 2.1 million metric tons of wheat and barley have been designated for shipment to Moscow between January and July 1981.

The announcement came two weeks after a meeting of the major grain-exporting nations in Australia, where a shaky agreement was reached to main-

tain limits on the amount of grain to be sold to the U.S.S.R. in 1980-81.

One of the main factors in the Canadian decision was an announcement of major U.S. grain sales to the People's Republic of China. Australia and Canada have both expressed concern, having previously been the PRC's main suppliers. The Canadians also noted that lifting restrictions on sales to the Soviets will increase revenue to Canadian producers by \$3,000 per farmer.

The U.S. Congress recently rejected a measure to cut off funds for administering the embargo, leaving the incoming administration to make a decision. Ronald Reagan's opposition to the embargo was a prominent theme in his campaign, but it is unclear if and when he will actually terminate the ban.

Trade unionists support attack on Volcker

Four trade-union leaders from New York and New Jersey sent a telegram of support to House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Tex.) after learning of the congressman's attack against Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker.

In their statement, the union leaders declared, "We thoroughly and wholeheartedly support your call for an end to the Federal Reserve dictatorship of austerity and recession. Without a doubt we agree that an institution 'not elected by anybody' has no rights to 'take it on themselves to plunge the country into a recession.' We support any and all efforts to reverse the Fed's disastrous policies and strongly urge that they begin with the resignation or removal of the Federal Reserve Chairman, Paul Adolph Volcker."

The statement was signed by Bernard Jackson, vice-president of UAW local 906 in Mahwah, New Jersey, Guy Wedgeworth, president of UAW local 980 in Edison, New Jersey, Grace Salata, UAW president of Ronson Electric in Woodbridge, New Jersey, Jessie Mayers, president of UAW local 9-4525 in New Jersey, and Frank Hewes, treasurer of Adirondack Steel in Adirondack, New York.

● **THE SENATE'S** Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which has carried out a year-long attack on the Department of Labor and the Teamsters Union, may change its focus under its probable new chairman, Republican William Roth of Delaware. Roth may be interested in using the subcommittee to investigate government waste and fraud rather than as a "McClellan Committee," as Sam Nunn, a Georgia Democrat, has done.

● **ORRIN HATCH** of Utah, the incoming chairman of the Senate Human Resources and Labor Committee, who said recently that he would like to steer clear of confrontations with labor, may be headed for one. Hatch told the *Engineering News Record* that he plans to introduce an amendment to the Hobbs Act that would open labor leaders to prosecution for extortion for certain strike activities. Labor leaders say such amendments could be used to curtail the right to strike.

● **THE ENVIRONMENTAL** Protection Agency's fiscal authorization, H.R. 7018, incorporates an important safeguard against capricious and unscientific actions by the agency. Inserted by Rep. William Wampler (R-Va.), it mandates peer review by non-EPA scientists to evaluate the validity of evaluations of chemicals.

● **WILLIS HARMAN**, head of the Stanford Research Institute's Center for the Study of Social Policy, told *EIR* that "the Aquarian Conspiracy," of which he is a founder, "will create real trouble for Ronald Reagan. We'll see great divisiveness over the course of the administration when the Aquarians rally people against Reagan's outmoded progrowth attitudes."