

# National News

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## U.S. Constitution saved—this time

By a vote of 66 to 34 at the end of March, the U.S. Senate failed to achieve a two-thirds majority and pass Senate Joint Resolution 225, to propose an amendment to the Constitution requiring a balanced federal budget. The original sponsors of the bill, conservatives Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), were joined by liberal Democrats Paul Simon (Ill.), Albert Gore (Tenn.), and Claiborne Pell (R.I.).

President Reagan, who supports the amendment, has vowed to take the battle to state legislatures, where the states can convene a convention for the purpose of revising the Constitution.

The Framers of the U.S. Constitution specifically rejected the notion of a balanced budget, as an impediment to the national development. As the Constitution specifies, "The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States . . . to borrow money on the credit of the United States. . . ."

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## Warnings confirmed of Maryland health danger

Dr. Debra Freeman, public health spokesman for the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC), testified before the Queen Anne County Board of Supervisors on March 26 that the sudden outbreak of virulent strains of tuberculosis on Maryland's Eastern Shore, demands urgent measures by state public health officials to prevent a dangerous disease outbreak. Tuberculosis frequently coincides with the incidence of AIDS.

Since tuberculosis first appeared among workers at a seafood processing plant in Kent Narrows in June 1985, forty-five cases have been diagnosed and three people have died.

Twenty percent of the population of the region tested "positive" for TB. Yet health officials are denying that there is an emergency, and the Atlanta Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has officially counted only two TB cases.

Dr. Freeman is a candidate for the Democratic Party nomination to the U.S. Senate. She has led several fact-finding tours to the Eastern Shore, and has warned that the extreme poverty of seafood processors in the shantytowns of the region could make Kent Narrows "another Belle Glade," the Florida center of an AIDS-TB outbreak. She reports that on one tour, she found 114 workers and their families living in a 10-room house with only one bathroom.

Two regional newspapers, the *Bay County Times* and the *Eastern Star Democrat*, reported on March 24 that Dr. Freeman's warnings had been confirmed, when two additional cases of TB were announced by the State Department of Health. These cases, like many of the others, are reported not to be responding to standard treatment.

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## Vatican lowers boom on 'American Heresy'

The Vatican's recent crackdown against Fr. Charles Curran, professor of moral theology at the Catholic University in Washington, is just the beginning of a new pattern of intervention into the United States, predicted Fr. Kenneth Baker of the New York Diocese, who came to Washington on March 15 to report on the Church's November-December 1985 Extraordinary Synod in Rome.

Father Curran was warned by the Church that he will be stripped of his right to teach as a Catholic theologian, if he does not retract his views on sexual morality. He was given this warning in a personal meeting in March at the Vatican with Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Curran is pro-abortion, pro-homosexuality, pro-masturbation, and pro-euthanasia.

Father Baker said that the Extraordinary Synod decisively rejected the concept that the Church embodies "the people of God"

concept. This notion underlies the pro-Marxist "liberation theology" of those, such as the Jesuits in Nicaragua and Cardinal Sin in the Philippines, who have led political destabilizations serving Soviet strategic objectives. The Synod also resolved that bishops' councils do not have any compelling moral authority in the Church—for example, the U.S. Bishops' recent papers on disarmament and the economy.

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## New York City passes 'gay rights' bill

New York City has now officially adopted the legal code of Sodom and Gomorrah; on March 20, the city council passed the much debated "gay rights" bill, by a vote of 21-14. The bill would, among other measures, impose jail sentences upon employers of more than four workers or landlords of more than two families for "discriminating" against homosexuals.

The New York City Catholic Archdiocese, nor, had conducted an intense lobbying effort to defeat the bill, along with Jewish and Protestant religious leaders. Episcopalian Bishop Paul Moore, on the other hand, led an effort on behalf of the bill.

A referendum measure to overturn the bill in the November elections will face hefty legal obstacles, as New York law provides for referenda only to amend the city charter, not on policy issues.

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## Senator Garn hits 'vultures' in media

Senator Jake Garn (R-Utah) sharply criticized the media, the Rogers Commission, and the Congress for their behavior in the current investigation of the explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger. In a speech before the annual American Astronautical Society on March 20, Garn said he has "never been more irritated at the way things were

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handled" than during this investigation.

The sole concern of the "vultures" in the media, he said, was to "point a finger and find blame, to pin it on somebody." The press acts as if the "crews were duped" into flying. "There are no draftees on the Shuttle," said the senator, who flew on a Shuttle mission last year. "We're all volunteers."

Garn stated that "the only limiting factor" in the U.S. program has been the Congress. "The reason we didn't go to Halley's Comet was the budget," he said, "not NASA." The American people are a "long way ahead of their politicians and the press," in their support for the space program, he said.

### Abrahamson to widen view of ABM Treaty

Lt.-Gen. James Abrahamson, the director of the Strategic Defense Initiative Office, has been given "a new opportunity" to review the SDI test program in the framework of a broad interpretation of the ABM Treaty, he told a Senate subcommittee on March 25. Abrahamson informed the Senate that under a less restrictive interpretation of the treaty, "we could go directly to the most convincing tests," which would also be the "most cost-effective. It could save both money and time and gain a higher confidence in results."

Conflict over the "broad" vs. "restrictive" interpretation of the ABM Treaty erupted last October, when the Defense Department and then-National Security Council head Robert McFarlane fought with the State Department to drop the narrow reading of the treaty, which has hindered the SDI's progress. At the time, President Reagan compromised, upholding the Pentagon's view that the United States was entitled to adopt a broad reading, but ruling that the program would continue to be conducted under the more narrow interpretation.

At a meeting of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group in Wuerzburg, West Germany, on March 20, General Abrahamson delivered a report to the NATO allies on progress toward the SDI, emphasizing the following developments:

- Several technological breakthroughs have been made, including successful testing of the ERIS kill weapons, designed to intercept incoming missiles, and the miniaturization of ring laser gyros, which form an essential part of SDI guidance systems.

- Japan is showing interest in participation in the SDI program.

- Britain and Israel have made progress in the design of "smart shells," fired by electromagnetic rail guns.

- Progress has been made in cheapening the cost of rocket motors, increasing the power of propellants and thrusters, and lightning detectors and rocket linings.

- Work on ground-based chemical energy lasers, a key element in SDI technology, is well-advanced; the most efficient in the world have recently been tested at the Livermore National Laboratory in California.

### Space commission urges Moon, Mars program

The President's National Commission on Space will shortly issue a report recommending an ambitious space exploration and development program for NASA, including proposals to mine the Moon and asteroids over the next 50 years, and to establish a manned base on Mars by 2027, according to *Aviation Week* magazine.

The Commission's plan calls for building lunar and Martian bases to house space pioneers and serve as centers for scientific research, manufacturing, and exploration of the solar system.

The panel, including former NASA administrator Thomas Paine, astronauts Kathryn Sullivan and Neil Armstrong, and pilot Chuck Yeager, assumes that the proposed space station will be built by 1994, and calls for developing several vehicles both humans and cargo to a Moon base, where large-scale mining and construction projects would begin after 2000. Later, a network of spaceports would link the Earth, Moon, and Mars, leading to a permanent colony by 2027.

- **JAMES BEGGS**, the former NASA head, received the Spaceflight Award of the American Astronautical Society on March 20, at the Goddard Memorial Symposium. Beggs, who was hounded out of the space agency by a trumped-up fraud indictment, received a standing ovation from the 400-plus representatives of industry, NASA, and the scientific community.

- **LOUIS FARRAKHAN**, the Hitler-loving head of the U.S. Nation of Islam, was a prominent speaker at a meeting of the International Pacifist Forum in Tripoli, Libya, at the end of March. Farrakhan has received \$16 million from Libya, the London *Times* reports.

- **JESSE JACKSON** was one of the few American politicians to criticize the U.S. strike against Libyan missile installations. "We must stop this very dangerous, short-sighted 'Rambo-ism' in foreign policy," he said on March 24. "I hope that what happened today will be stopped immediately."

- **THE NEW YORK TIMES** and the *Washington Post* on March 21 ran a two-page ad sponsored by the Soviet embassy in Washington. It included speeches by Soviet leaders calling for "eliminating nuclear missiles by the year 2000," "a nuclear-free world," and a nuclear test ban.

- **GEORGE BUSH** will tour Persian Gulf countries at the beginning of April, visiting Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, and the Yemen Arab Republic. U.S. officials say the purpose of the trip is to calm the "jitters" resulting from the Iran-Iraq war and the recent coup in South Yemen, and to assure U.S. friends in the area of continuing American interest in their security.