

Briefly

Thornburgh wants jurisdiction over Panama

U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh said Sept. 11 that the Justice Department is "trying to get jurisdiction over the case of" Panamanian Defense Forces commander Gen. Manuel Noriega "to see that he is appropriately prosecuted and punished."

Noriega was indicted by a Miami grand jury in March 1988 on drug-trafficking charges, at the instigation of the U.S. State Department, which saw this as a means of forcing his ouster from command and weakening nationalism in Panama. The move has backfired badly.

In televised statements on NBC News's "Meet the Press" program Sept. 11—which were surprisingly devoid of any defense of the Republican administration's anti-drug efforts—Thornburgh answered ambiguously when asked if Sen. Dan Quayle is qualified to head up the nation's anti-drug efforts, something which George Bush has said he will ask him to do. "That's not for us to judge," Thornburgh replied.

He also said the administration opposes several provisions of the anti-drug bill now up for debate in the House, one of which calls on the CIA to engage in covert anti-drug operations. "I think [that provision] ill advised," he said.

New AIDS cover-up from the CDC

The Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control has been caught in a new cover-up concerning AIDS, this time involving the extent of its spread among minorities and migrant laborers. The *Atlanta Constitution* has confirmed that the CDC deliberately deleted sections of a consultant's study which found that the agency has no "coherent plan of action" to prevent the high incidence of AIDS in the minority population.

A study in North Carolina revealed that nearly 3% of seasonal farm workers who used a certain health clinic were infected. This is twice as high as the rate found in

military recruits.

The rate shot up to 7% among migrant workers in the 30-39 age bracket, a rate that *Boston Globe* editors say is higher than among inner-city minority youth. It scored the CDC in an editorial for "mishandling the effort to curb the spread of the disease in black and Hispanic minorities," who, it says, make up 40% of AIDS cases, with 500,000 infected. "Congress should hold the CDC responsible for its poor performance in behalf of blacks and Hispanics threatened with AIDS."

The CDC has apparently felt enough heat to order an expanded study of migrant workers. CDC spokesman Dr. Richard Spiegel, who conducted the study of North Carolina migrants, told a reporter that eight health centers servicing migrants throughout the country will now be studied. CDC spokesmen are refusing to reveal the location of these centers or of the center at which the original study was conducted.

Migrants travel throughout the United States, admitted Dr. Spiegel, who told a reporter that the migrants utilizing the health center at which his study was conducted would typically spend part of the winter in southern Florida, and then travel to North Carolina, and to the Midwest in mid-summer. He said, however, that no one can identify the AIDS victims among the migrants, since the study was conducted under conditions of total anonymity.

State Dept. bars FBI role in Zia probe

The U.S. State Department barred FBI experts from joining in the investigation of the Aug. 17 death of Pakistan's President Zia ul-Haq, according to *U.S. News and World Report*.

"Right after the crash, the State Department allowed Air Force technical advisers to help sift through the wreckage, but, according to FBI officials, denied permission to FBI counterterrorism specialists, who are trained to preserve evidence," the report says.

Rep. Bill McCollum, a Florida Republican, is demanding an investigation into "possible obstruction of justice."

● **KAISER** Electronics President Stan Hill charged Sept. 8 that a spy had gained access to the secrets of a fighter pilot helmet at Kaiser's exhibit at the Farnborough Air Show in Britain. The prototype helmet, being tested by pilots flying F-18s, was dismantled, and, it is believed, the optical electronics photographed by a spy. The helmet allows pilots to fire at targets that are not visually directly ahead of them.

● **AT LEAST 12** states have passed or are considering imitations of the Minnesota "grass tax" law, after a judge upheld its constitutionality. The law requires drug pushers to purchase sales stamps anonymously, a major step toward legalization. Kansas, Illinois, New Hampshire, Montana, Colorado, and reportedly, California and Utah have passed such legislation. New York, Nebraska, Florida, and Louisiana are said to have called Minnesota asking for further information.

● **THE AIDS LOBBY** in California is upset about the prospects for victory of a public health referendum on AIDS placed on the California ballot by Rep. William Dannemeyer and "tax gadfly" Paul Gann. A lengthy *Washington Post* feature May 11 focused its coverage on Lyndon LaRouche, saying that the "coalition opposing" the Gann/Dannemeyer referendum has been "sapped" by two big fights against LaRouche referendums.

● **FOUR U.S.** military aircraft crashed in two days in the United States, Sept. 12 and 13. On Sept. 12, two F-14s crashed in North Carolina in separate incidents. The next day, two F-16s crashed. One crashed while on a training mission near Sumter, South Carolina struck a house and exploded. The second jet crashed in Utah.