

Business Briefs

Medicine

Army training surgeons in inner cities

The U.S. Army has begun training its surgeons for combat conditions in inner city emergency rooms.

Surgeons are being sent to intern at the Martin Luther King, Jr.-Drew Medical Center in the impoverished Watts section of Los Angeles, where 353 gang-related slayings occurred last year. The hospital treated 3,500 trauma cases last year—nearly 40% of the Los Angeles total.

"At King, we see the kind of penetrating trauma that we just don't see at other hospitals. It's a place where the residents will have to treat a large volume of high-velocity wounds, the kind we would see in war," an Army doctor told the Nov. 8 *Los Angeles Times*.

Population Control

World Bank to increase program funding

World Bank President Barber B. Conable pledged on Nov. 7 that the bank would nearly triple its spending for population control, from a \$100 million per year average in the past five years to a \$266 million per year average over the next three years. He pledged that he would "personally monitor our performance in both quality and quantity."

Speaking before the International Planned Parenthood Federation in Ottawa, Canada, Conable said the bank would work with private groups to make family planning "an accepted practice for at least half the couples of the developing world by the year 2000."

Several population-control advocates still condemned the bank's proposed population policies as not harsh enough. Sharon L. Camp of the Population Crisis Committee, told the press following Conable's speech at Ottawa, "There's a need to set tougher goals." Instead of a goal of 50% of Third World couples practicing contraception by the year 2000, the goal should be "universal availability of family

planning that year with 75% practicing it," she said.

Environmentalism

Conference stops short of extremist measures

Under pressure from the United States and Japan, the international conference on "global warming" in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, unanimously passed a compromise resolution on Nov. 7 that refrains from setting firm goals for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

The original draft committed the 72 nations to hold levels of emissions to the present level by the year 2000, a very large cut given the global increase in emissions of over 4% per year, especially in Third World countries that are attempting to industrialize. The final draft acknowledges "the need to stabilize" emissions, and notes that "many industrialized nations" believe such a goal should be reached by the year 2000. It does not stipulate the level of emissions it wants stabilized, saying that setting this goal should be put off until a world climatological conference scheduled for November 1990, and pledges to adopt a comprehensive international treaty on global warming by 1992.

Green fascists were upset at the failure to set draconian emissions cuts. "Less than six months ago in Paris, President Bush talked of the urgent need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions," said Brooks Yeager of the National Audubon Society. "Now the White House has sabotaged the first international effort to make good on the President's words. This is not the way to lead the world. . . . The concept of stabilizing emissions without any commitment to the level at which stabilization will occur, must be regarded either as a failure of nerve or cynical ploy," Yeager concluded.

Hans Blix, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, warned a U.N.-sponsored conference in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 10, "We can't reduce emissions of carbon dioxide without an expansion of nuclear power." He added that even an expansion of nuclear power might not be enough to permit a reduction of carbon dioxide emissions.

Monetary Policy

Brazil ordered to hyperinflate

The London *Economist* magazine called upon Brazil to hyperinflate its economy, in a mid-November editorial.

"Hyperinflate, Brazil: It's the only thing likely to get awful government off Brazilian backs," was the headline. The *Economist* said that more and more "thoughtful Brazilians" are looking with "wild surmise next door to Argentina, where inflation is 6,000% a year." The *Economist* praised Argentine President Carlos Menem for "starting off exactly right, squeezing inflation, starting a privatization program that stretches beyond the dreams of any mere Thatcherite, and recruiting his economic ministers from Latin America's biggest multinational company."

The editorial concluded, "Argentina and, earlier, Bolivia suggest a lesson for all of Latin America: that only the shock of hyperinflation can produce the political conditions needed for sensible economics. The lesson is even truer for Brazil's happy-go-lucky oligarchs than for its neighbors." An election wish for Brazilians is swift takeoff into hyperinflation, to smash the power of the politicians who have ruled you so badly."

Real Estate

Bush proposals designed to help markets

President Bush, under the guise of promoting home ownership for the poor, will propose real estate subsidies to help out the real estate and mortgage markets and try to postpone an inevitable deflation in property prices.

The program will be dubbed HOPE—"Homeownership, Opportunity and Prosperity for Everyone." Part of the package is \$1 billion to encourage the poor to buy the dilapidated public houses they live in, and thus take these properties off the government books. Another part will de facto underwrite mortgages for properties for "very low income families."

One part will lease 10% of the single-family houses in the Federal Housing Administration's huge inventory of foreclosures, to the homeless at \$1 per year, with provisions for their eventual purchase through state and local agencies, tax writeoffs, etc. This would prevent these properties from going on the open market and depressing price levels of real estate and mortgages, while the taxpayer foots the bill.

Bush also signed legislation on Nov. 9 raising the ceiling of federally insured mortgages nearly 25%, to \$124,875 from the current level of \$101,250, again, helping the mortgage market to keep the bubble from bursting.

Retirement

Baby boomers face poverty-level existence

A study by a group of insurance trade associations says that U.S. "baby boomers" will be too poor to retire at 65.

The study, conducted by six U.S. and Canadian actuarial societies, concludes that no more than half of those reaching the age of 65 between the years 2010 and 2028 will be economically able to retire, because of 1) inadequate tax incentives to encourage sufficient employer pensions and personal savings; 2) too few workers to support baby boomers' social security benefits; and 3) escalating and unaffordable health care costs.

AIDS

Vatican attacks official U.S. policy

New York Cardinal John O'Connor and U.S. AIDS researcher Robert Gallo clashed over AIDS policy on Nov. 13, at the first day of a Vatican-sponsored conference on the killer disease, according to Reuters.

Cardinal O'Connor said the spread of the disease should be stemmed by people abandoning what he called dangerous lifestyles. "I

for one cannot believe it is good medicine to ignore future behavior which can only exacerbate an individual's problems. . . . The truth is not in condoms or clean needles. These are lies, lies perpetrated often for political reasons on the part of public officials, including public health authorities, whose political future depends on their controlling the spread of AIDS."

Gallo admitted that he avoided the moral issues involved and said he thought O'Connor's speech was "upsetting," because the cardinal spoke from the position of someone with a strong belief in life after death. "In this world we live in, not everybody believes in an afterlife," Gallo said.

Nuclear Energy

Seabrook to produce electricity by January

The Seabrook nuclear power plant in New Hampshire could be producing electricity as early as January, utility officials said, after the federal Atomic Safety and Licensing Board approved on Nov. 14 the emergency evacuation plan presented by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The licensing of Seabrook has been held up for years by Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis's refusal to submit a state plan for evacuation. An executive order issued by President Reagan in November 1988, directing FEMA to prepare evacuation plans where states refused to do so, removed that particular obstacle.

Opponents of Seabrook have 10 days to appeal the finding, but an appeal will not necessarily delay the licensing of Seabrook for full power operation by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Opponents, such as Attorney General James Shannon, and Sens. John Kerry (D)

setts, have vowed to continue fighting to prevent the startup, characterizing the ruling as "a lawless decision," and "an arrogant action." Scott Denman, the director of the ecological-fascist Safe Energy Communication Council, equated starting up Seabrook with "rebuilding the Berlin Wall."

Briefly

● **THE PRESIDENTS** of Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay met in Buenos Aires to discuss economic integration. Brazilian President José Sarney said, "Our three countries today are pushing for an integration concept, inspired by links and cooperation which go back several centuries."

● **VIETNAM** will be sent \$250,000 worth of surplus government medical equipment, the first U.S. assistance since Saigon fell 14 years ago. "It is a response to the genuine humanitarian needs they have," a Pentagon official told the Nov. 9 *Washington Post*.

● **BOLIVIA** declared a state of siege on Nov. 15 to defend the killer austerity regime of Harvard's Jeffrey Sachs against striking workers. The Bolivian Workers Center said that at least 3,000 people were being held following pre-dawn sweeps on union offices throughout the country.

● **MONEY LAUNDERING** will be the subject of a new monthly newsletter published by Charles A. Intriago, a Florida attorney, the *Wall Street Journal* reported Nov. 8. Intriago "concedes that nefarious elements in the world of finance are also likely to benefit from" the newsletter, which will be called *Money-Laundering Alert*.

● **THE WORLD BANK** has a study on Africa under way called the "nightmare scenario," which extrapolates into the next century present trends in that continent regarding food production, environmental damage, and population growth.

● **LESTER BROWN** of the World Watch Institute says that another year of drought in the U.S. could double or triple grain prices, "no one knows how much. It would send shock waves through the world economy."