

# National News

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## Noriega prosecution attacked on Lehder deal

Robert Merkle, the former U.S. Attorney who put Medellín Cartel founder Carlos Lehder behind bars in 1987, attacked the deal with Lehder struck by federal prosecutors in the Manuel Antonio Noriega case in Miami. "It's okay to have the devil describe to you the working conditions in hell, but it's not okay to let the devil out of hell," said Merkle on the ABC News program "Nightline" Nov. 25.

Asked by the commentator if Lehder's pact with the prosecutors involves letting him out of jail, Merkle responded: "Well, not right now, but my sense is that what we have working here is a little bit of a deal with smoke and mirrors. My concern is that the government is dealing at all with Carlos Lehder. . . . We're missing the moral dimension of this problem. . . . We are touting, for example, the death penalty for drug traffickers, we are touting life in jail without parole, and here Carlos Lehder, the worst of the worst, is purportedly being given a deal to testify against somebody who is far below him in terms of culpability. So, you know, what are the American people going to think?"

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## Citizens' group demands probe of Thornburgh

A newly launched citizens' group is calling for a congressional investigation of former U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh for his police-state perversion of the justice system. The initiative was unveiled in R. Budd Dwyer's hometown of Meadville, Pennsylvania on Nov. 21.

Dwyer, a former state Treasurer, killed himself while giving a press conference after attacking Thornburgh, Henry Barr, and then-Acting U.S. Attorney James West for framing him up as part of a political vendetta.

The group is circulating a petition, addressed to the U.S. Congress and the Pennsylvania General Assembly, which reads in

part:

"We ask Congress to investigate former U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh for his politicalization of the state's criminal justice system. . . . Specifically, we ask Congress to investigate the roles of Thornburgh, his staff, and Acting U.S. Attorney James West in the conspiracy and subsequent unequal prosecution involving late State Treasurer R. Budd Dwyer; the official coverup and dismissal of charges that one of Thornburgh's sons used drugs, while other men's sons were imprisoned for the same offense; and charges of drug usage and corruption in the state Attorney General's office."

Crawford County, where Meadville is the county seat, is a heavily Republican area, but Thornburgh lost it by a wide margin to Harris Wofford in the Nov. 5 special election for U.S. Senate. Letters from friends of Dwyer were published in the local paper supporting the charge of state senator R. William Lincoln that many would not speak out against Thornburgh because they feared he would send the FBI or IRS after them.

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## Is Bush considering big new cuts in defense?

President Bush is preparing to announce major new cuts in defense spending in "an effort to recapture the political initiative before launching his 1992 reelection campaign," according to the Nov. 30 London *Financial Times*. Bush's "peace dividend," combined with proposed revisions in last year's budget agreement, is expected to be unveiled in his State of the Union address.

According to the *Financial Times*, Bush has been consulting with Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, Secretary of State James Baker, and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft about making cuts in the defense budget beyond the 25% reduction in forces planned by 1995. These cuts would affect significant weapons programs, such as the B-2 Stealth bomber, as well as the number of active U.S. Army divisions, tactical fighter wings, and aircraft carrier groups. The cuts, which could save up to \$50 billion,

would be phased in over five years.

A consensus is also emerging in the administration that last year's U.S. budget agreement is too inflexible, and that it should be amended so that spending can be shifted between categories, while maintaining an overall cap on total defense spending.

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## Budget cuts kill Michigan woman

Eva Frederick, a 51-year-old woman, died Oct. 28 in a Traverse City, Michigan hospital after she had started "rationing" her blood pressure medicine to make it last. She died after a blood vessel burst in her brain. Frederick had been receiving \$434 a month from General Assistance. She and more than 82,000 others were removed from that General Assistance program on Oct. 1.

Eva Frederick's daughter, Charlotte Jenkins, blames her mother's death on Gov. John Engler who ordered the cuts. She has written a letter to the governor telling him that "my mother is dead and I hold him personally responsible."

Jenkins went to the Department of Social Services to fill out forms to have the state to pay for her mother's death expenses.

"The lady looked me right in the eye and said, 'Mrs. Jenkins, if there's anything more we can do for you, just give me a call.'

"Well, a hell of a lot of good it's going to do Ma now."

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## Bishops respond to 'Magic' Johnson

Several U.S. Catholic bishops likened using condoms to avoid the AIDS infection to playing Russian roulette, in separate articles prompted by basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson's announcement that he carries the AIDS virus and will conduct a campaign for "safe sex."

"The 'safe sex' being promoted, aside from being immoral, is far from safe and is a form of sexual Russian roulette which will prove deadly for many," Bishop Michael D.

Pfeifer of San Angelo, Texas wrote recently.

"Condoms do not provide a reliable safeguard against a virus as deadly and cunning as the AIDS virus," wrote Bishop Rene H. Gracida of Corpus Christi, Texas. He cited studies by the National Center for Health Statistics showing a 10% or higher rate of failure for condoms tested for permeability to the AIDS virus.

Bishop Gracida noted that Johnson contracted HIV while engaging in what the basketball player called "the bachelor's life" and added, "We are not animals driven by blind instinct and hormonal pressures; it is possible to control one's appetites."

In a recent column for the *Catholic Commentary*, the newspaper of the Anchorage, Alaska archdiocese, Archbishop Francis T. Hurley cautioned that in declaring war on AIDS, tactics become an issue. "Some tactics have their own traps, hit the wrong targets, become the tragedy of friendly fire as in the Gulf war."

While Johnson seems to be a good, generous, compassionate man, according to Archbishop Hurley, he said the athlete "should stop and think of all the implications of the role of leadership he is assuming and others are giving him."

## Bush adviser attacks energy independence

Dr. Michael J. Boskin, President Bush's chief economic adviser, denounced energy independence as "economically foolish," at the American Petroleum Institute's (API) annual meeting in Houston in November.

The *Houston Post* quoted Boskin: "Restoring and enhancing our nation's economic growth must be our number one priority. . . . Large scale substitution of high-cost domestic energy for low-cost imported energy could significantly slow economic growth."

Boskin criticized President Nixon's effort in the 1970s, called "Project Independence"—the attempt to end U.S. dependence on foreign oil—as the "mistaken notion that we would benefit from eliminating all oil imports," according to the *Houston Post*.

API President Charles J. Dibona blasted environmental groups for using bogus issues, like the opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to exploration, simply for fundraising purposes. Allen E. Murray, chairman of both Mobil and of API, said that oil companies are trying to drill in the U.S., but government capitulation to environmentalists is making that impossible.

Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.) responded by blasting the oil companies for hypocritically funding the most radical environmentalist groups such as the Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Fund, and the Conservation Foundation.

## Judge grants father right to kill daughter

St. Louis County probate Judge Louis M. Kohn ruled Nov. 29 at the end of a four-day hearing that severely handicapped Christine Busalacchi is "terminal" and once more upheld the right of her father, Peter Busalacchi, to decide to cut off her feeding tube. Last summer, surgery she had on her heel interrupted the success in spoon-feeding her, nurses at the Midtown Habilitation Center, where she is a patient, told a pro-life activist.

The state of Missouri had appealed Judge Kohn's first decision in January. He said that he agreed with Kevin O'Rourke, director of the Center for Health Care Ethics at St. Louis University (SLU) Medical School, that tube feedings constitute ordinary medical care and can be discontinued when no chance of recovery exists. His findings will be sent to the Missouri Supreme Court.

At the hearing, Peter Busalacchi said openly for the first time that he wants to remove the feeding tube.

Staffers at the state-run Habilitation Center testified about Christine's reactions to visitors, especially that she smiles and laughs at one staffer who sings to her. The state's expert witness, pediatric neurologist Peter Cantor, who teaches at SLU, testified that Christine is aware of her surroundings and responds to his teasing games. "She can feel pain and pleasure," he said.

## Briefly

● **A SUPPORTER** of Lyndon LaRouche proposed on a KMOX radio talk show on the evils of television, that since the city of St. Louis has a pilot project to pay residents to turn in their guns, people should turn in their television sets. The idea got a terrific response.

● **ADM. JONATHAN HOWE**, the head of U.S. Navy forces in Europe, will become Bush's deputy national security adviser, replacing Robert Gates, it was announced in Brussels in November. A 1957 Naval Academy graduate, Howe once worked under Henry Kissinger at the National Security Council.

● **THE SAN FRANCISCO Examiner** on Nov. 29 printed an attack on Lyndon LaRouche and *21st Century Science & Technology* magazine for their efforts backing the investigation of cold fusion. In "The Science Guy" column, science writer Keay Davidson says that "LaRouche blames cold fusion's chilly reception on a 'political witchhunt.'"

● **CHELSEA**, Massachusetts police officers on Nov. 21 described the deployment of state police to patrol city streets there as a "slap in the face," and said that local and state officials should pump more money into the local department. The city is being governed by a "receiver" appointed by Gov. William Weld, after being declared bankrupt.

● **TRANSPORTATION** Secretary Samuel Skinner admitted to the *New York Times* that President Bush will not veto the highway bill, despite its failure to shift the burden of paying for new transportation onto the states, "because the states are broke."

● **MARYLAND** Gov. William Shafer has announced plans to cut welfare benefits by 30%, which, coming on top of cuts already about to take effect, will cut the monthly payment for a family of three from \$406 to \$264. Recipients supposedly could replace all or part of the funds if they could show that they are paying their rent.