

National News

Wofford: I'm not an 'American firster'

"A number of recent articles have inaccurately tagged me as an 'America First' candidate," wrote Sen. Harris Wofford (D-Penn.), in the Dec. 26 *Washington Post*.

"There was a powerful message coming from Pennsylvania: that Americans are deeply dissatisfied with the current direction of our country, the decline of their family income over the past decade, the skyrocketing cost of health care and, most important, the failure of the federal government to move into action on these and other serious problems facing our society," Wofford wrote.

"Their message wasn't to be less bold abroad; only that we should show the same boldness at home. When I worked with John Kennedy . . . we did not see any reason not to care about both famine in Ethiopia and segregation in America. . . . As John Kennedy once said, we can't be strong abroad if we're weak at home. . . . Unfortunately President Bush seems to have read the election returns less as a call for urgent action at home than as a call to simply *stay* home and to avoid dealing publicly with international challenges."

Bush gang accused of new dirty hostage deal

David H. Halevy, author of the book *Inside the PLO*, accused the Bush administration of secretly arranging a new "hostage deal," in which Washington gave major concessions to Iran to secure release of Hezbollah-held hostages in Lebanon during the past three months, in a commentary in the Dec. 29 *International Herald Tribune*. "That deal was struck at a secret meeting in Lebanon in the latter half of September, not long after then U.N. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuellar had tea in Teheran with President Hashemi Rafsanjani."

According to Halevy, the six-member command of the Iran-controlled Hezbollah

was also present. He cites as source one of the participants at the secret Teheran meeting, and says a deal was struck in which Iran agrees to protect the Hezbollah terror units once their hostages are released. The deal also includes facilitating a new Hezbollah offensive against Israeli and American targets in the Persian Gulf once the Bush administration had facilitated settlement of cash claims dating back to the 1979 freeze of \$7 billion in Iranian assets in U.S. banks, \$278 million payment for impounded military equipment, and admission that the U.S.S. Vincennes was violating Iranian waters in 1988 when it shot down an Iranian civilian airplane.

"The British government signed trade and arms agreements with Teheran to the tune of \$4.2 billions" as soon as British hostages Terry Waite and two others were freed by Hezbollah, Halevy charged. "By mid-October Iran had transferred \$86 million to Hezbollah's empty coffers," allowing it to launch its new terror campaign in southern Lebanon in which six Israeli soldiers have so far been killed.

In a bitterly worded statement released following the burial of her husband Dec. 30, Maj. Robin Higgins, the widow of Marine Col. William Richard Higgins, attacked the Bush administration deal with Syria and Iran. Higgins and William Buckley, the CIA station chief in Beirut, were buried in separate ceremonies that day.

In reference to Bush's public thanks to Syria, Maj. Robin Higgins said, "If we thank these savages, then we are merely inviting them, at a time and place they will select, to kill again. Shame on us if we do."

Disabled protest Clinton's budget cuts

Citizens in Arkansas chained themselves inside Gov. Bill Clinton's office Dec. 30 demanding that he restore Medicaid cuts that would have prevented many disabled people from continuing to live at home.

Clinton had cut about \$22 million in Medicaid benefits; part of those cuts would have reduced the availability of medical equipment like wheelchairs as well as

slashed coverage of personal home care from 72 to 50 hours a month, which would have meant many people being institutionalized—at even greater cost.

When a group of the disabled chained themselves inside his office, Clinton soon backed down out of fear of this brutality being featured in the news. A spokesman for the disabled, Rev. Wade Blank, told the *New York Times* that Clinton has "said it is a civil right to live outside of a nursing home. Then he turns around and slashes the very budget that allows people to live outside of nursing homes."

Once Clinton reversed the cuts, a campaign aide said the criticism was "untrue."

According to the Jan. 4 *Washington Times*, lawyers for Clinton have sent letters to news media carrying ads by an alleged native-Arkansas group opposing Clinton's candidacy, warning that the Federal Communications Commission might force stations to give Clinton equal time if they run ads against him.

Rehnquist Court moves to limit habeas corpus

The U.S. Supreme Court has asked attorneys involved in a grand-larceny appeal to submit arguments on whether federal judges deciding *habeas corpus* cases should be required to defer to the findings of state courts rather than to evaluate the issues themselves, the Jan. 5 *New York Times* reported. This is yet another attempt to limit *habeas corpus* appeals and violation of due process, and further transfer federal constitutional powers and rights to state courts.

The extant grand-larceny case, *Wright v. West*, involves one Frank West, who was convicted by Virginia state courts and whose direct and *habeas corpus* appeals had been denied through the state appeal process. In April, the Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals "ruled in his favor, finding that the state courts had misapplied the law to the particular facts in the case. No reasonable man, the court said, could have found the defendant guilty of larceny simply because he was in possession of some of the stolen goods a month after the theft," the *Washing-*

ton Post reported.

This put the appeals court's interpretation at odds with all the previous findings of "fact"; the Rehnquist Court is now trying to set a precedent of saying that the federal courts must defer to a state court's application of the law to the specific facts of any case.

Democratic Party leaders fear open convention

There is a "wild-card" feature in this year's presidential nominating process that some Democrats fear will make it difficult to control. The so-called "Jesse Jackson reforms" adopted by the 1988 Democratic National Convention not only eliminated "winner-take-all" primaries, but required that all primaries award delegates solely on the proportion of popular votes won by each candidate.

"Proportional representation is tailor-made for troublemakers," the Jan. 2 *Wall Street Journal* quoted Elaine Kamarck, a campaign official for Walter Mondale in 1984 and for Bruce Babbitt in 1988. "This provision is perfect for losers who want to muck around in the party. While Republicans let their winners win, we let our losers plague the winners."

LaRouche comments on Commerce appointment

Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche responded Dec. 26 to President Bush's appointment of Barbara Franklin to become the new secretary of commerce, emphasizing the importance of that position in his plans to end the ongoing depression.

"I don't want to disparage the current nominee for the position of Secretary of Commerce under Bush, but unfortunately, this very important part of our federal government has become a dumping ground for political appointees, especially political appointees who have done a great deal to raise money for the Republican Party," LaRouche said.

"Now, mainly that's part of the contributing factor in the current, ongoing depression in the United States, because what we really lack is competent management leadership, in the Commerce Department from the top down; and to clean out some of these funny-funny boys and so forth, who have been helping to make a mess of the economy.

"I want to have a science-driver program for the economic recovery and job expansion of the United States, run largely through the Commerce Department, as far as federal agencies of government are concerned.

"So, I promise that I shall not appoint a campaign fundraiser on the ground of being a campaign fundraiser. I intend to have a Commerce Department which is full of old-fashioned-style management competence to get this economy of ours moving."

FWPP again protects criminal element

The Federal Witness Protection Program, which is under attack for protecting individuals who are committing crimes while under its aegis, has again been embarrassed.

Nicholas Mitola, 44, was sentenced to five years in prison Dec. 27 for three probation violations: gambling, failure to report a change of address, and failure to report to his probation officer.

Originally, Mitola had been sentenced to 10 years for charges relating to heroin and cocaine distribution. Those charges were suspended two years ago after Mitola testified against 20 reputed members of the Lucchese crime family. That trial lasted 21 months, but none of the defendants were convicted.

Mitola was relocated and placed in the Federal Witness Protection Program. Since then, prosecutors in Spokane, Washington have charged Mitola with the stabbing death of 46-year-old Iranian immigrant Iraj Vedadi in February 1991. Vedadi had close to \$70,000 cash when he vanished Feb. 20. Mitola is alleged to have offered a man \$3,000 to bury the car found with Vedadi's body.

Briefly

● **THE NEWARK** city council voted unanimously Dec. 18 to recognize "the new nations of Croatia and Slovenia, their sovereignty and right to exist free from external threat or force of arms."

● **SECRETARY** of State James Baker was named "Man of the Year" for 1991 by the Dec. 27 *London Financial Times*. Lionel Barber said Baker "does not rank as one of the great strategic thinkers," but was committed to the U.S. acting as a major world power. Barber noted that Baker does not "much like reading books," other than ones about himself.

● **THE RIGHTS** to Gary Sick's book on how the Reagan-Bush 1980 election team conspired to delay the release of American hostages, the "October Surprise," has been purchased by Columbia Pictures for \$500,000, the Dec. 31 *Washington Post* reported.

● **JOSEPH SOBRAN** called for the release of the sealed files on the John F. Kennedy assassination in the Dec. 28 *Washington Times*. "The lone-gunman theory is the sort of thing that would be dismissed as crackpot if it hadn't come from official sources," he commented.

● **WARREN BROOKES** died of complications of pneumonia on Dec. 28. The syndicated columnist had been distinguished by his attacks on the fraudulent science behind the ecology policies of the Bush administration.

● **DAVID DUKE**, the former Klansman and Republican presidential candidate, has been sighted partying in Palm Beach, Florida bars with platinum blond bimbos, according to the Dec. 31 *New York Post*.

● **GOV. WILLIAM WELD** of Massachusetts is working with advisers to legalize sports gambling, according to AP Jan. 3. The reason given is to get rid of illegal gambling.