

National News

Clinton anti-drug agenda: no room for legalization

White House National Drug Control Policy Office Director Lee Brown said that President Clinton has put controlling illegal drugs at the "top of his domestic policy agenda," in a commentary in the *Washington Times* on Nov. 13. "Americans can rest assured that legalization will not be tolerated by this administration. The small segment of our population that advocates legalization and maintains that drug users are the only victims need only go as far as their local hospital . . . neonatal department," he said.

The 1994 National Drug Control Strategy is the most comprehensive and balanced anti-drug strategy ever, Brown wrote, adding that "it is a major shift in the way the nation responds to the drug problems."

'Get LaRouche' judge up for reappointment

When Virginia Circuit Court Judge Clifford R. Weckstein comes up for reappointment in early January, the Virginia General Assembly will have a chance to remove one of the most corrupt judges sitting in the Old Dominion, according to an Oct. 28 press release issued by EIRNS. At the end of December, the Senate and Assembly Courts of Justice Committees will consider judicial appointments for 1995, which will then be voted on by the full legislature when it convenes in January.

The release stated: "As the court record shows, Weckstein, who presided over 15 trials of associates of Lyndon LaRouche in Virginia, is a shameless toady of the Anti-Defamation League [ADL] of B'nai B'rith who has displayed total disregard for the principles of justice.

"Evidence on file with the [U.S.] Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals shows that LaRouche and his associates are innocent and that the government knew at all times during the prosecution that they were innocent. . . .

"The exposure of Weckstein's corruption came only after he had demonstrated his actual bias and corruption" in the 1989 trial of LaRouche associate Michael Billington, where "Weckstein condoned efforts by Billington's attorney, Brian Gettings, to have Billington declared mentally incompetent for insisting on a jury trial! Weckstein would not allow Billington to fire Gettings for his treachery, but forced him to stand trial with a lawyer who had betrayed him. Weckstein also showed bias by upholding an outrageous 77-year jury sentence against Billington.

"At this point, the Virginia courts have ignored the standards of judicial conduct and have countenanced this outrageous behavior on the part of a sitting judge. Now, the General Assembly has the chance to partially right this wrong by removing Weckstein from the bench."

Constitution would have barred North from Senate

An article in the Nov. 21 issue of the weekly newspaper *New Federalist* showed how Oliver North could have been disqualified from being seated in the Senate, had he won the Virginia election. Citizens' groups, including the Defeat that SOB Committee, headed by *New Federalist* editor-in-chief Nancy Spannaus, were preparing such a challenge. The procedure under which North would have been challenged, involves a provision of the Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, which disqualifies an individual as "a Senator or Representative in Congress . . . who, having previously taken an oath . . . as an officer of the United States . . . to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in rebellion or insurrection against the same, or given aid and comfort to the enemies thereof."

This provision applies not only to the Civil War. Victor Berger, the Milwaukee Socialist, was excluded from the Senate early this century after being convicted of espionage; when his conviction was overturned, he was allowed to take his seat.

In North's case, the grounds for charging him with having "given aid and comfort

to the enemies" of the United States would include: collaborating with terrorists and enemies of the United States in his arms-for-hostages dealings (the strongest case is that of Monzur Al-Kassar, an identified terrorist, drug trafficker, and Soviet agent); purchasing weapons from communist-bloc countries for the Contras and other purposes; working with and protecting drug smugglers in Central America, at a time when the U.S. President had declared a War on Drugs.

U.S. bishops take stand against welfare cutoffs

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops on Nov. 14 criticized Newt Gingrich's (R-Ga.) proposal to cut off welfare payments after 60 days and turn the poor over to charities and orphanages, according to the *Washington Post*. The bishops were holding their annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

"The state has an obligation to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves," the Rev. John H. Ricard, auxiliary bishop of Baltimore, told reporters. He also denounced what he called a "bumper-sticker approach" to criminal justice policy, saying that slogans such as "three strikes you're out, lock them up for good—those are not going to work."

The *Post* noted that the church "is signaling it will continue its advocacy for the poor," in an era when the American public says it is less tolerant than ever of supporting government welfare programs.

Commission report: Va. jails in wretched state

The wretched state of jails in Virginia was the subject of a report by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) in late October. JLARC, the General Assembly's investigative arm, told the General Assembly to clean up the Commonwealth's jails now, to stop a combined AIDS and tuberculosis epidemic that is spreading in conditions of overcrowding that were

called "offensive to elementary concepts of human decency" in a U.S. Justice Department report in August.

However, local officials are pointing to the difficulty in implementing JLARC's proposals, warning that Gov. George Allen's "Proposal X," which abolished parole and imposed longer sentences for violent and repeat offenders, may result in reduced financial aid to counties to deal with the growing number of inmates which will result from this legislation.

Sheriffs statewide have complained of record overcrowding, with inmates sleeping on floors in the halls of filthy jail cellblocks. Sheriff Michelle Mitchell in Richmond has threatened to sue to force the state to take its inmates out of her jail, which in early November had 1,496 people in a bed capacity of 908.

GOP think-tank plans 'Republican Future'

The Project for the Republican Future, founded by William Kristol, held a forum on Nov. 10 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., to report on what they expect from the new Congress that convenes next January. The forum featured neo-conservative spokesman William Bennett, George Bush's former education secretary. The theme of the forum was how to force through "limited government" and how the new Republican majority in Congress would achieve it, mostly through broad-based tax cuts, spending cuts, and a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution (see p. 54 for an evaluation of this approach).

Bennett best summarized this idea, interpreting the mid-term elections as the voters saying, "Give us back our money, and with it we will take our sense of responsibility." He said that Congress should respond: "We are going to take less from you, but we are also going to do less for you." He called this the "end of the 'nanny state.'"

David Frum, author of the book *Dead Right*, attacked the last 30 years of civil rights legislation as "too much regulation." What the GOP has to pay most attention to,

in the two years leading up to the general elections, he said, is "the overwhelming Republican vote among the group 'white males,'" which he said gave 60-62% of their vote to Republicans.

"What we call 'civil rights,' was experienced on the receiving end as perhaps the most intrusive form of regulation most Americans encountered in their daily life. For millions of people of a socio-economic status, that is a form of regulation that has cost them, very directly and painfully, personal opportunities, and it has not just shaved fractions of a percent the growth in GNP as have the growth in environmental regulations, it has personally deprived them, they feel, of individual jobs and individual opportunities. That is part of what the Republican Party must do something about."

British empire firms preying on U.S. dailies

The Hollinger Inc. publishing empire of Canadian Conrad Black told Reuters on Nov. 8 that it is on the prowl for more newspaper acquisitions in the United States. Hollinger's U.S. flagship is the *Chicago Sun-Times*, which it acquired along with a group of 61 suburban papers last March. Hollinger and its units have about \$148 million in cash on hand to fund acquisitions, Hollinger President David Radler estimated.

Hollinger raised \$112.5 million last May with the sale of a block of its shares in the London *Daily Telegraph*, whose Sunday edition U.S. reporter Ambrose Evans-Pritchard has led the international media smear campaign against President and First Lady Clinton. "The sale was made to build up a war chest . . . for other acquisitions. It put millions of dollars into Hollinger accounts," said Radler.

About 900 U.S. daily newspapers remain in the hands of independent owners or small chains, making them potential takeover targets for Hollinger's American Publishing Co. American Publishing has become the second biggest newspaper publisher in the United States after Thomson Corp., which is British owned.

Briefly

● **GALEN KELLY**, the kidnaper-for-hire in the "Get LaRouche" task force, has been scheduled for a Jan. 17, 1995 re-trial in the kidnapping of Debra Dobkowski. Kelly's conviction in the May 1992 kidnapping was overturned. Kelly has told federal Judge Timothy Ellis that he is indigent and has fired his attorneys Brian Gettings and Frank Dunham.

● **GAMBLING** initiatives failed to pass voter approval in many states during the mid-term elections. An initiative that would have opened 47 casinos in Florida was defeated. Casino measures also failed in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Colorado, and on the Navajo reservation. Only Missouri is reported to have passed a measure allowing slot machines on riverboats.

● **GEORGETOWN** University students greeted President Clinton by the hundreds outside after he delivered the first "Carroll Quigley Lecture" on Nov. 9 at his alma mater. Many of the signboards expressed opposition to the California anti-immigrant Proposition 187.

● **VENGEFUL** "get tough" crime laws were voted up in Georgia, California, and Ohio on Nov. 8. Georgia enacted mandatory life sentences for second-time violent felons; California enacted a similar, "three strikes" law of 25 years to life. Ohio removed one step of the appeals process in capital cases, sending death sentence appeals directly to the state Supreme Court. In New York, Governor-elect George Pataki has promised to impose the death penalty to which lame-duck Gov. Mario Cuomo was vehemently opposed.

● **A DEMOCRATIC** legislator in Pennsylvania announced after his reelection that he was switching to the Republican Party, thereby handing control of the legislature over to the Republicans, for both the lame-duck session and the new legislature next year.