

National News

Clinton appeals to pope on humanitarian aid

President Clinton appealed to Pope John Paul II for closer collaboration on aid and humanitarian relief to needy countries according to the Dec. 22 *New York Times*. The appeal was made in a letter presented on Dec. 5 to Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano by U.S. Ambassador Raymond Flynn, in which Clinton praised Catholic aid efforts as "a cornerstone of efforts to lend assistance in times of need."

In his letter, Clinton suggested that "by working together more closely and better coordinating our responses to humanitarian crises, we could alleviate the suffering. . . . We would like to share information, including field reports, on a more systematic basis." He recommended new cooperation "in the areas of crisis prevention and mediation," as well as in "information-sharing."

The *International Herald Tribune* wrote that Clinton and Flynn see their approach as a way of outflanking congressional Republicans who want to cut back foreign aid, and that there are areas in Africa that receive aid which are not of U.S. strategic interest. One of Flynn's counter-arguments is that money would actually be saved, by working with an aid capability in and around the Catholic Church that is "effective and professional," and which knows how to get aid "directly to the people in overwhelming need."

President considering Africa trip for 1995

The White House confirmed on Dec. 12 that President Clinton may travel to Africa some time in 1995. "Nothing has been scheduled, but I think it is a signal of our ongoing involvement in Africa and our commitment to help the continent overcome its economic and health problems as we go forward. The President has said several times that he'd like to visit Africa at some point, but there are no plans," said White House press

spokesman Dee Dee Myers.

National Security Adviser Anthony Lake left on Dec. 12 for Africa, where he visited Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique, Zambia, Angola, Benin, and Senegal, she said. A statement announcing Lake's trip stated, "Mr. Lake's travel reflects the administration's firm commitment to work with African nations."

The Lake delegation "will review ways to address the key challenges facing all African nations." These include "the President's Horn of Africa initiative to address the root causes of food insecurity in this ten-country region, support for the Organization of African Unity's conflict resolution mechanism, and means of relieving the crushing burden of debt."

Beam technology to be used in anti-drug war

The Clinton administration unveiled its latest advancement for shutting down the drug trade at the Summit of the Americas in Miami: neutron beam technology which was designed to scan Soviet missiles will be used as part of the arsenal of the Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center (CTAC) program, established by White House drug policy adviser Lee Brown.

"The technology we are developing will allow Customs to inspect quickly, so as not to delay the legitimate shippers, but still put a serious dent in the drug traffickers' business," Brown told reporters in early December. "Unfortunately, as opportunities for trade and new business expand, those who traffic in death and misery may take advantage. These are the narco-traffickers."

Brown's office and CTAC want to modify the technology, developed in the 1980s to verify nuclear and chemical weapons disarmament accords, for use in the drug war. "The neutron physics technology derives from the START [nuclear weapons] treaty," program director Al Brandenstein told Reuters. "It was designed to put a Soviet missile through and count the number of warheads." The converted version, being tested for commercial use in 1995, allows 30 whole containers an hour to be moved, while a

neutron beam scans their contents. "It will tell you a container is full of coke without even opening it."

Tyson's attorney scores Espy special prosecutor

Thomas C. Green, a lawyer for Tyson Foods, has accused Special Prosecutor Donald Smaltz of conducting a "witchhunt" in his investigation of former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy and of running an investigation which is "totally out of control and unlawful." Green sent a letter to Smaltz charging him with using threats and intimidation while interviewing a former Tyson's employee in following allegations that illegal drugs had been transported on company aircraft.

FBI agents working for Smaltz accused a former Tyson's pilot of lying when he told them he had never seen drugs on a Tyson's plane. According to Green's letter, when the pilot denied having seen any drugs, the FBI agents "asked him how he thought his [new] employer would react when it learned he had lied to federal agents."

The drug allegations were first circulated by London *Sunday Telegraph* Washington correspondent Ambrose Evans-Pritchard last October. On Dec. 11, Evans-Pritchard gloated that Smaltz had expanded his investigation of Espy to cover "the global operations of Tyson Foods, Inc." Larry Nichols, a favorite source of Evans-Pritchard who has threatened President Clinton (see *EIR* Dec. 2, 1994), also targeted Tyson founder Don Tyson in a letter to him.

FEC shuts down 10-year probe against LaRouche

Attorneys for Lyndon LaRouche's presidential campaigns were notified on Dec. 22 that the Federal Election Commission (FEC) had closed all outstanding investigations of past LaRouche campaigns. Two such investigations, termed "Matters Under Review" (MURs), had tied down the committees' resources and personnel since 1984

Briefly

and 1988, respectively.

The FEC stated no reason for terminating the cases other than "the circumstances." Two recent court decisions probably contributed to the decision: In the first, the U.S. Supreme Court let stand an appeals court ruling that the FEC was unconstitutionally composed because it had included two *ex officio* commissioners appointed by Congress (violating the separation of powers). At the same time, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia threw out another FEC enforcement action, because the FEC had initiated the investigation while the two illegally appointed commissioners had still been sitting. This was true of the LaRouche investigations as well.

Terminating the LaRouche MURs closes out a 10-year history of attempts by the FEC to slander LaRouche as a habitual violator of election laws. It comes on the heels of the commission's finalizing the "clean bill of health" audit of LaRouche's 1992 campaign only this year, which in turn clears the decks for release of that campaign's surplus funds for retirement of old campaign debt.

D.C. cuts \$280 million in jobs and services

The Washington, D.C. City Council cut \$280 million in social programs and city jobs on Dec. 21, as the first step toward making the city acceptable to Wall Street loan sharks. In order to borrow \$250 million on the bond market at the end of the year, the District has to demonstrate its "credit-worthiness." The result is that 2,700 jobs will be cut, a wage rollback and a two-week furlough without pay will be demanded for municipal employees (including teachers), and the current net of social programs for the city's large number of poor will be slashed. This is just the beginning. Deeper cuts will occur in the new year.

Mayor-elect Marion Barry, who has been involved in the negotiations with the banks, remarked, "The workers are getting beat up, there is no question about it," according to the *Washington Post*. The City Council's decision to preserve such basic

government services as libraries and schools, while cutting social services such as aid to pregnant mothers and food for the poor, prompted Barry to comment, "We're pitting libraries against people [who] need assistance."

Fitch Investors, one of three major firms that evaluate the financial condition of localities, nonetheless downgraded D.C.'s credit rating the same day, and warned investors that lending to the city is risky because it could run out of money. Fitch claimed that the cuts did not go far enough.

Prison labor competes with regular workforce

Ongoing research into the extent of privately funded work in state prisons reveals that it is huge and growing at a rapid pace, producing everything from designer jeans to golf balls, in both private and government-run institutions, in 22 states. While prison factories have existed for decades, what is new since the Reagan-Bush era is that prisoners in state prisons are earning in some cases minimum wage or higher, producing goods that are also produced outside prisons, and competing for markets.

Inmate-produced goods include: the "X" duck-bill hats commemorating the film Malcolm X (California); logos for everything from the Jerry Garcia Band to Lexus automobiles (California); macadamia nuts (Hawaii); Spalding golf balls (Hawaii); Eddie Bauer garments (Washington); electronic cables (South Carolina); and designer jeans called Prison Blues (Oregon).

The situation is very similar to the plight of scabs during a strike: Inmates need decent work and training in order to have money and skills on release, and to relieve boredom. But in order to get it, they are turned into a controlled workforce that can be used to drive down wages and replace employed labor.

As Lynn McAuley, president of the National Correctional Industries Association told *American Way* magazine, for its February feature on private prisons, prison laborers work harder, are more dependable, and outproduce their outside counterparts. For many, this is the first real job they have ever held.

● **PAUL TSONGAS** is boosting former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Colin Powell as a third party candidate for the 1996 presidential elections. Tsongas, a former Massachusetts senator who ran for the Democratic nomination in 1992, told the *Boston Globe* that "a passionate center party" could win "if it is led by the right person—like Powell."

● **LEGALIZED GAMBLING** is a "sucker's bet," wrote *New York Post* columnist Ray Kerrison on Dec. 14, lashing out at pro-gambling plans announced by New York Governor-elect George Pataki. Kerrison pointed out that Pataki announced his plans two weeks after receiving a \$25,000 contribution from Donald Trump while 800 casino executives were meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada to plan the expansion of their "industry."

● **A COALITION** of seniors' organizations met on Dec. 11 in Chicago and vowed to fight a proposal by U.S. Senators Bob Kerrey (D-Neb.) and John Danforth (R-Mo.) to eliminate cost of living adjustments in Social Security payments, and to raise the minimum age for Medicare to 70.

● **CHARLES MURRAY**, co-author of the racist social policy tract *The Bell Curve*, first proposed putting the children of unmarried mothers in orphanages last year, well before Newt Gingrich picked up the idea, according to ABC News anchorman Ted Koppel on *Nightline* on Dec. 17.

● **THE SUPREME COURT** of Michigan issued a ruling on Dec. 13 on four cases of "assisted suicide," upholding as constitutional the state law banning it. The court said, however, that helping someone kill himself is not murder but, rather, that assisting suicide is its own species of crime. The justices are remanding the Kevorkian cases back to the trial court, saying they should not have been dismissed.