

# National News

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## Court rules GM can cut benefits to retirees

The Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati ruled on Jan. 7 that General Motors has the right to cut the health benefits of 84,000 retirees, forcing them to pay for a share of their health-care costs. The ruling overturns an earlier three-judge panel decision. If it holds on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, it could open the way for U.S. corporations to slash health coverage and other retirement benefits, according to the Jan. 9 *Washington Post*. The Labor Department has sided with the retirees in the case, and is joining other cases across the country to help retirees win back coverage from numerous employers.

Horace Deets, executive director of the American Association of Retired Persons, said the decision gives employers "a free hand to break their promises of health benefits to retirees, assures that no retiree will ever be certain of his or her health benefits, and that no employer will ever have to fear the consequences of breaking faith with its retirees on health care." The decision comes in the context of President Clinton's announcement, earlier in the week, that he will seek to allow Americans who have lost their health insurance but are too young to qualify for Medicare, to buy Medicare insurance, a proposal which has been met with rabid criticism by the Conservative Revolutionaries.

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## Hollinger rag pushes 'new Confederacy'

London's *Sunday Telegraph*, owned by the Hollinger Corp., a British intelligence front, promoted a new Southern secessionist movement (like the last one, nurtured by Britain's oligarchy), in its Jan. 11 issue. Author James Langton fawned nostalgically: "The shadow of the Confederacy has returned to haunt the Deep South. Once again the talk is of freedom from Yankee cultural

imperialism and liberation from the yoke of Washington. The new separatists are the fastest-growing political movement south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Their dream is to weld the old Confederacy in a new nation of 80 million people that would be the third wealthiest in the world."

A map of this new "Confederate States of America," includes the 11 states of Britain's original Confederacy, plus Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Maryland.

Langton praises the Southern League, whose leader, Michael Hill, speaks proudly of what he calls the "Anglo-Celtic" heritage of the Old South, and tells Langton that he expects to see a reborn Confederate nation. The League plans to back candidates in at least a dozen state elections this autumn, and hopes to run a candidate for lieutenant-governor of Louisiana, early next year.

As *EIR* reported on Feb. 28, 1997, the Southern League of Michael Hill and Thomas Fleming were key participants in an event sponsored by the London-based Lord Byron Foundation, which, not surprisingly, also backs the separatist dictatorship of Bosnian Serb war criminal Radovan Karadzic.

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## Ollie North to stump for President?

Oliver North was introduced as a "possible Republican Presidential candidate in 2000," on ABC's "This Week" program by co-host Cokie Roberts on Jan. 11. North is going to New Hampshire this week, a trip he said is being made at the invitation of the Christian Coalition.

North was criticizing the present Republican leadership, claiming that the American people "are looking for somebody in the Republican Party that will stand up for the traditional family values that made our party great, stands up for conservative fiscal principles, and has the courage to stand up to this administration." Later he said that "they're looking for leadership that says, 'we want government off our backs' "—this from the guy who spent his first two years at the National Security Council working with

George Bush to draw up plans for "continuity of government" in the event of nuclear war, or of widespread internal dissent, which included plans for suspension of the Constitution.

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## Oklahoma City jurors score Feds' sloppiness

The foreman of the jury which deadlocked on the sentencing of Oklahoma City bombing defendant Terry Nichols, said in a press conference on Jan. 7 that "the government didn't do a good job of proving that Terry Nichols was greatly involved" in the bombing, and that the government had not made its case beyond a reasonable doubt. The jury had found Nichols guilty of conspiracy and involuntary manslaughter, but had acquitted him of first- and second-degree murder charges.

Niki Deutchman, the jury foreman, when asked about the other "John Does," the suspects who were originally identified, answered: "Thank you for asking about that. I think that the government perhaps really dropped the ball. I think that there were a large number of sightings right around—the week before and the days and months after the bombing—and sketches of people that were recognizable. In this trial, there even was a photograph of someone who may have been involved with mixing the bomb, was putting the bomb together. And that person—it was a photograph from a newspaper—obviously, that person's identity is known."

"I think there are other people out there," Deutchman continued, "and decisions were probably made very early on that Tim McVeigh and Terry Nichols were who they were looking for, and the same sort of resources were not used to try to find out who else might be involved." Later she stressed that the government has an obligation to find anyone else who was involved and to bring them to justice, adding: "I doubt very much that two people—if Terry Nichols was even greatly involved—that two people would have been enough to have been able to carry it off."