

National News

CDC misidentified epidemic in New York

A serious illness not previously known in the United States, which was killing elderly people in New York, was misidentified as St. Louis encephalitis by scientists of the Centers for Disease Control, according to the *New York Times* on Oct. 11. When a local investigation pointed against this diagnosis, the CDC would not communicate with the scientist. Weeks later, alternative routes were taken to move authorities to a correct analysis of the problem.

Authorities were alerted on Aug. 23 to a possible epidemic involving neurological symptoms. In early September, after testing only for six insect-borne viruses already common in the United States, the CDC's Duane Gubler concluded that the disease was St. Louis encephalitis.

But as the epidemic continued, Bronx Zoo officials became aware that their exotic birds, and crows in the zoo's vicinity, were dying of a strange disease. Zoo scientist Tracey McNamara probed the symptoms and tried to report them to the CDC, as a possible clue to the human epidemic. When the CDC did not return her phone calls for a week, she contacted the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, which confirmed that a virus was killing the birds. She also sent bird tissue samples to a California laboratory, which identified the bird disease as West Nile virus. The Army and the California lab analysis both apparently helped the CDC change its story.

On Sept. 23, CDC's Dr. Gubler told a press conference that he had changed his mind, that the disease was a form of West Nile fever.

Allan P. Zelicoff, a scientist at the Center for National Security and Arms Control at Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico, said, "The encephalitis outbreak in New York is a powerful lesson for public health authorities. It is a sobering, not so reassuring, demonstration of the inadequacies of the U.S. detection network for emerging diseases. . . . We're spending hundreds of mil-

lions on questionable stockpiles of vaccines and antibiotics. We should be improving the ability of local public health officials to recognize and report strange illnesses to a central authority that can quickly tell them what to do about it."

Clinton hits anti-China bias of defense bill

On Oct. 5, in signing into law the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, President Clinton made a statement criticizing, and modifying, the law's anti-China bias, as well as its provisions for nuclear activity in the Department of Energy and its policies concerning Russia.

"I am concerned with the tone and language of a number of provisions of S. 1059 relating to China, which could be detrimental to our interests," Clinton said. "China is undergoing a profoundly important but uncertain process of change, and I believe we must work for the best possible outcome, even as we prepare for any outcome. The Act's provision requiring annual reports on Chinese military power, similar to those previously produced on Soviet military power, assumes an outcome that is far from foreordained—that China is bent on becoming a military threat to the United States. I believe we should not make it more likely that China will choose this path by acting as if the decision has already been made.

"The provision establishing the Center for Study of Chinese Military Affairs is troubling for the same reason. The Secretary of Defense will ensure that the Center is held to the highest standards of scholarship and impartiality and that it explores a wide range of perspectives on the Chinese military.

"Our long-term strategy must be to encourage China to grow into a more prosperous and open society; to integrate China into the institutions that promote global norms on proliferation, trade, the environment, and human rights; to cooperate where we agree, even as we defend our interests and values with realism and candor where we do not.

We cannot do that simply by confronting China or seeking to contain it. We can only do that if we maintain a policy of principled, purposeful engagement with China's government and China's people.

"I intend to implement the China provisions of the bill in a manner consistent with this policy, including, where appropriate, combining several of the reporting requirements."

EIR's Spannaus counters Deutch panel cover-up

Former CIA Director John Deutch, the chairman of the Congressionally created Commission to Assess the Organization of the Federal Government to Combat the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (known as the Deutch Commission), which issued its report in July, summarized its work at a meeting of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Law and National Security on Oct. 14. The Commission's primary recommendations had to do with efforts to coordinate counter-proliferation efforts in which at least 84 U.S. agencies are involved in one way or another.

The overall consensus in the meeting, about the need to counter weapons of mass destruction, was broken with the first question, in which *EIR*'s Ed Spannaus said:

"I wonder if there's not an element of the 'old generals fighting the last war' in this. Did you address the question of weapons based on new physical principles, such as EMP [electromagnetic pulse], directed-energy weapons, what a decade ago were referred to as radio-frequency weapons? Did you address those issues at all?"

"We did not," was Deutch's only answer.

In the course of his remarks, Deutch also referenced the case of Pakistan, to show how U.S. counter-proliferation policy may be inconsistent with U.S. foreign policy aims, in that Congress had imposed sanctions against Pakistan at the same time that the United States was relying so heavily on Pakistan

GEN. ANTHONY ZINNI, the commander of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf, called on Oct. 19 for increasing U.S. troop strength in the area. Zinni was accompanying Defense Secretary William Cohen on a visit to Saudi Arabia. He recommended that equipment for a fourth American infantry brigade be positioned on ships in the Gulf.

THE LOS ANGELES SENTINEL on Oct. 14 covered Lyndon LaRouche's certification for Presidential primary matching funds. "Vice President Al Gore, Bill Bradley, and LaRouche have all qualified for use of public money," the paper reported, "and may receive up to \$16,750,000 maximum in public funds for agreeing to an overall spending limit, complying with state campaign spending regulations, permitting an extensive campaign audit, and other requirements."

LAROCHE'S Presidential campaign was endorsed by six Australian and New Zealand trade union officials. Their unions include the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union; Municipal Employees Union; Australian Workers Union; Australian Bank Employees Union; Musicians Union of Australia; and Australian Council of Trade Unions.

THE UNITED Autoworkers newspaper of local 5841 in Winnsboro, South Carolina, reported on Oct. 11 that "another candidate is beginning to appear who may prove to be a more formidable Democratic candidate than either of the other two: Lyndon H. LaRouche is an economist who has put together the only plan, so far, to save the world financial system from total self-destruction."

JESSE JACKSON, JR. (D-Ill.) responded to a caller on a C-Span broadcast, who said that he was 27 years old and didn't see why the United States needed a Social Security system. Jackson said that the caller was too young to remember the Great Depression, in which Americans lost everything, and that Social Security was designed to protect people in their old age.

with regard to U.S. support for the Afghan resistance.

Book charges G.W. Bush with cocaine arrest

A new book by J.H. Hatfield, titled *Fortunate Son: George W. Bush and the Making of an American President*, "confirmed that Bush was arrested for cocaine possession in Houston in 1972," and that the record was expunged after Bush did "a little community service at a minority youth center instead of having to pick cotton on a Texas prison farm," according to the Internet magazine *Salon* on Oct. 19. The story has gone through several versions since July, when *Salon* was the first source to publish a "tip" about the expunged arrest records, and the head of one youth center (identified in an earlier version) said that the story wasn't true.

But author Hatfield, whose book is being published by St. Martin's Press, writes that several sources, including "a high-ranking advisor to Bush," and a "former Yale classmate" of George Dubya, confirmed the story to him. The classmate is quoted saying: "George W. was arrested for possession of cocaine in 1972, but due to his father's connections, the entire record was expunged by a state judge whom the older Bush helped get elected."

St. Martin's was reportedly not going to put the book out until January 2000, but moved the schedule up when Hatfield wrote an "Afterword" containing additional information. For example, *Salon's* August story had said that Bush's community service occurred at the Martin Luther King Center in Houston in 1972, but the head of that center, Magdalene Bush (no relation) had said, "No way," and complained that she wouldn't talk about anything because her programs depend on state funding. However, the *Washington Post* and a book called *First Son* both reported that the same year, 1972, Bush worked for Project PULL, a center for wayward poor youth; the Bush campaign confirmed that.

EIR's own investigation is under way.

Whether or not the Hatfield report is true, the really important story concerning Bush and drugs, is the role that Bush Senior played in the Iran-Contra drug trade, as documented by *EIR* in a September 1996 Special Report, *Would a President Bob Dole Prosecute Drug Super-Kingpin George Bush? EIR* will have more to say on this subject in forthcoming issues.

Forbes calls for Super-NAFTA with U.K.

Presidential pre-candidate Steve Forbes said in a speech in London on Oct. 13, that if elected President, he would intensify economic and political relations between the United States and Great Britain. His speech, delivered at the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library, echoed the call by Hollinger Corporation Chairman Conrad Black for a "Super-NAFTA," on the model of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

"Strengthening the alliance between the United States and Great Britain and expanding the economic and political cooperation between our two countries must be a top priority of the next American President," Forbes said.

"Simply put: If Great Britain is strong, secure, and sovereign, America benefits. But if Great Britain is weakened economically or militarily then American interests suffer. Likewise, if the U.S. is strong, secure and sovereign in the 21st century, Great Britain and the rest of the world will benefit enormously. But if the U.S. is weakened or withdraws from the world stage, then Great Britain and the rest of the world are in serious trouble. It's just that simple. . . ."

"So tonight, I announce that if I am elected the first American President of the 21st century, I will invite the people of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland to join the United States in a North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement. Because the barrier that lies between us is not the Atlantic Ocean. It's big government."