

National News

Admiral backs Sino-U.S. ties

U.S. Vice Adm. Walter Doran, commander of the Seventh Fleet, sailed into Hong Kong on Dec. 7 for a four-day visit during which he will host mainland Chinese officers on board the flagship *USS Blue Ridge*. According to the *South China Morning Post* on Dec. 7, Doran announced that he was not "unduly worried" by China's naval upgrade program, and wants U.S. relations with Beijing to be put back on track.

Doran said that he was aware of reports that China was enhancing its submarine-based ballistic missile capability. "China has every right to make evolutionary changes to its military capability," he said. "I watch what is happening in every place. I am not unduly concerned about the P.R.C."

The presence of the *Blue Ridge* and the meeting with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) showed that Sino-American military relations were improving since NATO bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in May, Admiral Doran said. "This certainly does not signify the return to normal U.S.-China military ties," he told an Asia Society function on Dec. 7. "We were developing a very good relationship. . . . I would hope we would get back to that."

A reception on board the *Blue Ridge* was to be attended by a PLA delegation for the first time since May.

Report assesses health of uninsured Americans

A new study by the American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine, reported in the *Washington Post* on Dec. 7, documents that Americans who lack medical insurance coverage are sicker, and more likely to die prematurely, than those who are insured.

The report analyzed data from hundreds of studies of the uninsured done over the past decade. Ironically, the report argues that the

uninsured add avoidable expense to the health-care system, because they are less likely to receive preventive care and much more likely to be treated only when very ill. Some additional findings:

- Uninsured pregnant women have a 31% higher likelihood of an adverse hospital outcome than insured pregnant women.
- Uninsured children are up to six times as likely as insured children to have gone without needed medical, dental, or other health care.
- Uninsured Americans are 2.8 times more likely to be hospitalized with diabetes; 2.4 times more likely to be hospitalized for hypertension.
- Uninsured Americans are 3.2 times more likely to die in a hospital.

George W. Bush's Texas has the highest rate of uninsured residents in the nation: At 24.5%, the Texas figure is 50% higher than the national average of 16.3%.

Clinton defends his China policy

In a press conference on Dec. 8, President Clinton came to the defense of his China policy, in response to a question from the *Washington Times*, which has been leading the charge against that policy.

"Mr. President," the reporter asked, "with China building a second short-range missile base, allowing them to take Taiwan with little or no warning, are you concerned about America's ability to defend that island, especially with a Chinese company taking over the Panama Canal's ports at the end of this month?"

The President first addressed the Canal issue, underlining that the Canal will be totally controlled by the Panamanians. He continued: "Now, the second question is, China is modernizing its military in a lot of ways. But our policy on China is crystal clear. We believe there is one China. We think it has to be resolved through cross-strait dialogue, and we oppose and would view with grave concern any kind of violent action. And that hasn't changed.

"There has been a lot of buildup of ten-

sion on both sides that I think is unnecessary and counterproductive. If you look at the amount of Taiwanese investment in China, for example . . . it's obvious that eventually they're going to get this worked out, because they're too inter-connected by ties of family and, increasingly, by ties of the economy, and the politics of neither place should lead either side into doing something rash. And I hope that this will not happen. But our policy is clear, and you know what I've done in the past. And I think that's all I should say about it right now."

Secretary Cohen calls for greater NATO role

Speaking at the congress of the German Armed Forces (Bundeswehr) Commanders in Hamburg on Dec. 1, U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen backed the British colonialist effort to turn NATO into a global intervention force for the 21st century. "If past is prologue," he said, "events in the Balkans will not be the last to challenge our common interests and values."

Cohen said that more should be done to complete "our ability to meet the unexpected, NATO's transformation from a territorial defense to a more flexible, deployable force." That force should be ready to deploy "across a range of missions," to also counter "new types of challenges, such as chemical, biological, or terrorist attack and information warfare. In short, we need, and have committed to building, a 21st-century Alliance ready and equipped for 21st-century missions."

Cohen appealed to the Germans to shift vital defense resources away from what he called the "oversized Main Defense Forces," dating from the Cold War era, to a new type of armed forces that would have some 150,000 men under arms in rapid deployment forces, including the equipment for those kinds of missions.

Cohen complained that Germany has so far assigned a great deal of its financial resources to the reunification process and to the transition to a unified European currency, which has placed the Germans in the

THE SUPREME COURT has announced that it will review which takes precedence: the *Miranda* ruling—a keystone of civil rights in America—which invalidates evidence taken from defendants who have not been informed of their rights at arrest; or a Federal law passed after that ruling, allowing all “voluntary confessions” to be used against defendants, regardless of this condition.

PRESIDENT CLINTON, when asked at his Dec. 8 press conference to name his candidate for “Man of the Century,” replied: “I would have to choose Franklin Roosevelt, because in this century, our greatest peril was in the Depression and World War II, and because he led us not only through those things, and laid the building blocks for a better society with things like Social Security and unemployment insurance . . . but he also looked to the future, endorsing the United Nations and a lot of the other international institutions which were subsequently created. . . .”

THE JUSTICE DEPT. will investigate the FBI sting operation which was proposed to be run against then-D.C. Mayor Marion Barry last year, Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder announced on Dec. 9.

ARTHUR COIA, general president of the Laborers union (LIUNA), announced his decision to “retire” on Dec. 6. Coia was under fire from the Justice Department and the GOP’s Clinton witch-hunters, as an ally of AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, and one of the top ten Democratic Party contributors, with close relations to the Clintons.

THE JUSTICE POLICY Institute reports that, at the current rate of growth of the U.S. prison population, on Feb. 15, 2000, America’s prison and jail inmate population will top 2 million. This means that the United States, with less than 5% of the world’s population, will have one-quarter of the world’s prison inmates.

“bottom third of NATO defense spenders.” Cohen said that “Germany’s budget shares for defense for investment, and particularly for procurement, should rise substantially, to strike the balance typical of other major allies.” Some of the required extra money could come from “savings . . . through the elimination of excess and obsolete bases and infrastructure associated with a Cold War-era standing force,” he said.

The way he has been able to carve out an extra \$25 billion in the United States, by the year 2003, should be taken as an example by the Germans, he said, concluding with a new piece of Pentagon poetry: “Today, we can hear the hoofbeats of tomorrow, both its promise and its peril. By building a new Bundeswehr, by building a new NATO, we can catch the coattails before the challenges and charges of tomorrow’s world come thundering by.”

N.Y.’s Giuliani cracks down on homeless people

New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who faces a challenge from Hillary Rodham Clinton for the 2000 New York Senate seat vacated by Democrat Patrick Moynihan, has instituted a vicious crackdown on the homeless in New York, to make the city more “acceptable” to its upscale patrons. Similar crackdowns are going on around the country, particularly in the San Francisco Bay area, whose warm winter weather attracts thousands of desperate homeless at this time of year. But Giuliani is trying to carry out a policy of terror without equal in the nation.

On any given night, there are about 24,000 people in the city’s homeless shelters, according to newspaper reports. New rules, which were to take effect on Dec. 13, would require that any able-bodied shelter resident who refuses to take a slave-labor job provided by the city be evicted, and if the person is a parent, the children be taken away, on the grounds that the parents are negligent. The state Supreme Court issued a restraining order on the city to stop implementation of the policy, which one judge said “strikes terror” in parents. Maria Fos-

carinis, executive director of the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, called the policy “Kafkaesque,” according to the *Washington Post* on Dec. 11. “You’re being negligent because you’re being kicked out on the street?” she asked.

The real problem is the lack of low-rent housing and of jobs that pay a living wage. Even working full-time, a minimum-wage earner cannot afford the rent for an efficiency apartment in most U.S. cities, according to a January study by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty.

Further, according to a new study by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, about 40% of the nation’s homeless appear to be mentally ill. In New York City, the figure is about 50%, according to Ray Brescia, director of the mental health project of the Urban Justice Center. About 40% of the nation’s homeless are children, whose parents account for 30% of the adult homeless. Sixty-six percent of homeless people suffer chronic or infectious diseases, not including AIDS, and most lack health insurance.

Reno is urged to ban use of secret evidence

Arab-American and Muslim groups met with Attorney General Janet Reno on Dec. 8 and urged her to ban the use of secret evidence in immigration cases, according to wire service reports.

“We have seen that secret evidence does not survive the ultimate test—the U.S. court system,” said James Zogby of the Arab-American Institute. “From our meeting today, it is obvious that the Attorney General has spent a great deal of personal time of this issue, and she is clearly troubled by the use of secret evidence.”

However, the American Muslim Council was not satisfied with Reno’s response. “There is no improvement in her position except that she’s still reviewing the situation and she promised to extend the review further,” said Yahya Basha, a member of the AMC Board of Directors, who also serves on the Michigan Human Rights Commission.