

National News

White House opposes Taiwan Security bill

The White House is urging the Senate not to pass the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act, and President Clinton plans to veto the bill if it does pass, according to wire service reports. National Security Adviser Sandy Berger said that he believes "we will be able to convince most Senators that we should not upset the delicate balance" by putting through the bill, which he called "a very risky undertaking."

The bill passed the House of Representatives by an overwhelming majority on Feb. 1. It includes establishment of a secure military communications link directly from the Pentagon to the Taiwan military; directs the U.S. military to train more Taiwanese officers; and would require the President to report to Congress annually about Taiwan's defense wish list.

Meanwhile, Liu Xiaoming, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Chinese Embassy, warned in a speech in Washington that the bill would set back U.S.-China relations more than 20 years and could lead to military confrontation. All the progress which has been made in Sino-U.S. relations since 1972, he said, has been based on the U.S. acceptance of the One China policy. "This legislation tries to negate the One China principle and the three joint communiqués. It attempts to treat Taiwan, not as a political entity, but as a country, and even an ally of the United States," Liu said. "It tries to restore the military-to-military relationship between Taiwan and the United States to the pre-1979 level."

Liu called the legislation "a grave interference into Chinese internal affairs" and "a breach of Chinese sovereignty" by the U.S. Congress. "Only when the U.S. agreed to abrogate diplomatic relations with Taiwan and abolish the defense treaty with Taiwan was it possible for China and the U.S. to establish diplomatic relations," Liu said. "Therefore, this legislation tries to undo everything that has been done since 1979." "It is also bad for the United States," Liu continued. "If this legislation becomes law, it will increase the chances of military con-

frontation between China and the United States."

"Our basic policy is peaceful reunification," Liu said. "This has been reaffirmed by President Jiang and by Premier Qian again last month. On the other hand, we have to make sure that a peaceful settlement can only be possible when the separatist forces are strongly checked."

Robert Reich hits Gore's austerity

Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich assailed Al Gore as a modern version of Calvin Coolidge, in a commentary in the *New York Times* on Feb. 8. Reich has endorsed Bill Bradley for President, and earlier, in his book *Locked in the Cabinet*, nailed Gore as an ally of former White House adviser Dick Morris. Morris's "triangulation" policy pushed through the 1996 Welfare Reform travesty, which cost Democrats control of at least one House of Congress.

"The Democrats are marching under the banner of fiscal austerity," Reich writes in his article. He criticizes President Clinton for following Andrew Jackson by calling for elimination of the national debt: "'Let's make America debt-free for the first time since 1835!' the President exulted in his State of the Union Message."

As for Gore, he "says he'll pursue debt reduction even if the economy slows, 'just as a corporation has to cut expenses if revenues fall off,' adding that a recession should be viewed as an opportunity to push cuts further 'before any other options are considered.' ... He should wash his mouth out with soap." Reich says, "Even House Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt is sounding a bit like Calvin Coolidge these days."

Reich says that eliminating the debt is not an appropriate goal; rather, the question is, what is the borrowed money used for? Reich explains why "Democrats [are] sounding like Coolidge Republicans": They are catering to those voters who are supposedly attracted by Republican tax-cutting plans.

"If the Democrats stand for anything," Reich concludes, "it should be for helping

the little guy who's gotten relatively little out of this buoyant economy so far. Not incidentally, little guys include most voting-age Americans. Little guys could get passionate about good health care and good schools. But faced with a choice between tax cuts for the big guys or fiscal austerity, the little guys may well decide to stay home."

U.S. female prison population doubles

A Federal study released on Jan. 31 reports that the nation's female inmate population in state and Federal prisons in the 1990s doubled, growing far faster than the male population. The study, commissioned by Washington, D.C.'s Delegate to Congress Eleanor Holmes Norton, also found that the majority of women in prison who are incarcerated for nonviolent crimes, are mothers, and are incarcerated at great distances from their children; and that women in prison are more likely to suffer from HIV infection and mental illness than men are. Norton is preparing legislation to try to ameliorate the situation, including a community-based sentence program and other alternatives to prison.

According to the latest Bureau of Justice Statistics report, for mid-year 1998, women accounted for 6.4% (82,716) of all prisoners nationwide, up from 4.1% in 1980 and 5.7% in 1990.

Loudoun racists are dealt a setback

After a hearing on Feb. 5, the 10th Congressional District Committee of the Virginia Democratic Party voted 10-4 to overturn the Dec. 9 election of the Loudoun County, Virginia, Democratic Committee (LCDC). LaRouche Democrats had challenged the legitimacy of that election, claiming that it was tainted with fraudulent, racist, and intimidating tactics that led to violation of the spirit and letter of the U.S. Constitution, the Virginia Party Plan, the Voting Rights Act, and the Charter of the Democratic Party.

PRESIDENT CLINTON will visit India for five days, beginning on March 20, and Bangladesh beginning on March 25. The question of a visit to Pakistan is still “very much open,” according to *The Asian Age* of Feb. 1. Clinton is said to be keen to visit Islamabad, and has refrained from severe comments about Pakistan’s military regime, whereas White House advisers have reportedly opposed such a visit, the paper said.

NEW YORK CITY Mayor Rudolph Giuliani had a private lunch at City Hall with Henry Kissinger, reported the *New York Post* on Feb. 4. It is said that Giuliani is getting briefed on issues for his GOP Senate campaign against First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

SHORTAGES of injectable or intravenous antibiotics are forcing U.S. doctors to scramble to find substitute regimens, and the drug-supply disruptions could put hospital patients at risk, according to a survey conducted by the Infectious Diseases Society of America.

THE NEW YORK STATE Republican Party came up with a last-minute deal for an “open primary,” which will put John McCain and Alan Keyes on the ballot, as well as George W. Bush—regardless of the number of petition signatures gathered by their campaigns. McCain had contested the party’s stringent ballot access requirements, and Federal Judge Edward Korman was believed to be ready to rule against Bush and the GOP.

THE GOP MEMBERS of the Federal Election Commission are stonewalling an investigation of illegal foreign contributions into the party’s 1994 election effort. The Democratic National Committee went to court to force the FEC to investigate a \$2.1 million donation from Hong Kong businessman Ambrous Young, to the Republican National Committee’s National Policy Forum. FEC commissioners are deadlocked along party lines, at 3-3.

Although the immediate question in the Feb. 5 hearing was the conduct of the LCDC committee election, the overriding issue was the fight around the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the racism of a clique of the Democratic National Committee in excluding Lyndon LaRouche’s Presidential delegates in 1996—a clique now seeking to throw out the Voting Rights Act entirely. The local LCDC leadership clique, led by former chair Dave Whitmer, had openly embraced Fowler’s position against Loudoun resident LaRouche, which is based upon lies and slanders.

Thus, the Whitmer clique used time-tested segregationist tricks in order to defeat five LaRouche candidates for election to the LCDC, down to and including preventing three non-white voters associated with the LaRouche Democratic slate from casting their ballots.

Now that the 10th District has overturned the election, it is expected that the losers will appeal to the State Steering Committee, as is their right, so a new election has not yet been scheduled.

Hospitals detail impact of health budget cuts

According to a report commissioned by the American Hospital Association (AHA), “At the end of 2004, nearly 60% of the nation’s hospitals will not be able to cover their costs when treating Medicare patients.” This funding shortage is due to the cuts mandated by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. While some of the cuts have been restored, inflation and other cost increases have compelled hospitals to cut to the bone, and they still cannot meet their costs.

AHA President Dick Dawson is quoted, “There are many hospitals in crisis across America, and that crisis means a crisis for the patients and communities that depend upon our services.”

The association held a rally at the Cannon House Office Building on Capitol Hill, which included Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Spencer Abraham (R-Mich.), and Reps. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) and Jim Nussle (R-Iowa). At a press briefing, AHA

Executive Vice President Rick Pollack said that U.S. hospitals need, over a five-year period, \$25 billion to make up the gap in payments. AHA Senior Vice President Carmela Coyle said they used to be able to make up the budget gap by shifting to the private sector, but now hospitals are in a squeeze, since, with health maintenance organizations (HMOs) cutting costs, there is no “escape valve.”

Administration seeks NASA budget increase

The Fiscal Year 2001 Clinton administration request to Congress for NASA includes a \$435 million increase over the current year, to \$14.035 billion. It is the first increase in NASA’s budget in seven years; throughout the Clinton administration, the space budget has been declining, largely due to Al Gore’s “reinventing government” policy, which saw the agency’s personnel drop by more than 7,000 employees.

Briefing reporters on the budget request on Feb. 7, NASA Administrator Dan Goldin stated that over the next six years, the agency will spend \$2.1 billion for upgrades and improvements in the 20-year-old Space Shuttle system, with the first \$600 million in this budget request. Chronic problems with orbiters, which have delayed the past few Shuttle missions, have been partially due to underinvestment in both the manpower to prepare the launches, and the age and obsolescence of the technology.

Goldin said that 1,850 people will be hired by NASA over the next two years, which will be a net gain of 550 people when retirements are taken into account. He reported that the agency has been closely monitoring the effects of the layoffs at the space centers, and has decided that the level of stress, the effects of heavy workloads, and the fact that a generation of NASA employees is nearing retirement age, required an increase in staffing. The new manpower will be deployed to the Kennedy, Johnson, and Marshall centers, in the manned space program area. He said that the agency will “stabilize” employment at the 1999 level.