

National News

South Dakota Hails Amelia Boynton Robinson

Schiller Institute Vice Chairwoman Amelia Boynton Robinson toured South Dakota during early June, where the civil rights heroine was welcomed with the greetings from leading political figures.

- Former Democratic Presidential candidate and U.S. Sen. George McGovern, wrote on June 4:

"I am glad Amelia Boynton Robinson will be visiting South Dakota. She has been a force for good all of her life. I admire her as a great voice for reason and decency. I wish I was able to be there with her. I welcome her to my state and wish her the very best."

- Gov. M. Michael Rounds (R), wrote on June 8:

"Dear Mrs. Robinson,

"It is my pleasure to welcome you to South Dakota. Your work for civil rights in this country is commendable. The civil rights movement was one of the great events of the 20th Century, and your work and that of your colleagues has improved the lives of many in South Dakota and across this nation. I have always admired those brave citizens who faced daunting tasks to fight for a cause that they believed in. These leaders were denounced, mistreated, and persecuted, but they endured. Today, their work is something of which every person can be proud.

"Again, on behalf of all the people of this great state, welcome to South Dakota. I hope you enjoy your time here and that you will visit often."

Privatization of Air Traffic Control Blocked

A bipartisan effort in the U.S. Senate defeated the Bush Administration's attempt to privatize the nation's air traffic control system on June 12. The 56-41 vote for Sen. Frank Lautenberg's (D-N.J.) amendment to the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization maintains air traffic control as "an

inherently governmental function."

"Today the Senate spoke loud and clear: The nation's air traffic control system is not for sale," Lautenberg said. "I was shocked when I learned that the Bush Administration wanted to contract out air traffic control to the lowest bidder."

The U.S. air traffic control system is rated the best in the world. Privatization could sacrifice the safety and security of the nation's aviation system, Lautenberg said. He cited Britain, where near-miss crashes and other problems have increased by 50% since privatization, and delays caused by air traffic control have increased by 20%. The British air traffic system's finances have also been wrecked, with debt service up 80%. In Canada, the newly privatized system has run up a \$145 million deficit in just the past year, causing an additional cost to be tacked onto every airline ticket.

It was one year ago, on June 6, 2002, that President George Bush took the first step toward privatizing air traffic control, by removing language specifying air traffic control as "an inherently governmental function" from the relevant Executive Order. At the time, the Bush Administration denied that it had any plan to privatize. But, using an obscure regulatory process called Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-76, nearly all air traffic control was then reclassified to a "commercial" function, meaning that its operations could be outsourced to a private contractor.

The FAA authorization now heads to conference, for reconciliation with the House version.

Wesley Clark Questions 9/11 White House Policy

Retired Gen. Wesley Clark, former U.S. Supreme Commander in Europe, told NBC's "Meet the Press" on June 15, that "there was a concerted effort during the Fall of 2001, starting immediately after 9/11, to pin 9/11 and the terrorism problem on Saddam Hussein."

"It came from people around the White House," Clark said. "I got a call on 9/11—I was on CNN, and I got a call at my home

saying, 'You've got to say this is connected—this is state-sponsored terrorism. This has to be connected to Saddam Hussein.' And I said, 'I'm willing to say it, but what's evidence?' And I never got any evidence. And these were people who were Middle East think-tanks and people like this. I mean, there was a lot of pressure to connect this, and there were a lot of assumptions made. But I never personally saw the evidence, and didn't talk to anybody who had the evidence to make that connection."

Clark noted that in the period leading up to the Iraq War, he had kept asking: "Where is the imminence of the threat?" He reported getting calls from people, who would say, "Well, look, don't you think the President might know something you don't know?" I certainly hoped he did. But it was never revealed what the imminence of the threat was," he said.

Clark indicated that "I am going to have to consider" entering the Presidential race, and that he would likely run as a Democrat.

Senators Call for Bonds To Build Infrastructure

Senators James Talent (R-Mo.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) have introduced a \$50 billion "Build America Bonds" measure to fund transit, bridges, harbors, airports and highways projects. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on June 14, in an editorial entitled "Mr. Talent's New Deal," applauded the "conservative Republican" for the program, which the author described as "a public works program that looks like something cooked up in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first 100 days in office." The editorial said, "State governments are strapped, and money for transportation needs is vital for economic development."

Ed Mortimer, a spokesman for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, recommended that the proposal be "strongly considered" by Congress.

The discussion of the FDR precedent in economic policy reflects the growing influence of Lyndon LaRouche's Presidential campaign, notably his call for a "Super-TVA."