

# National News

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## NASA Restructured For Exploration Thrust

National Aeronautics and Space Administrator Sean O'Keefe announced on Jan. 15 that the new Office of Exploration Systems, charged with organizing President Bush's new space initiative for exploration of the Moon, would be headed by Rear Adm. (ret) Craig Steidle. The Office, according to NASA, is to set priorities and direct the identification, development, and validation of exploration systems and new technologies. The move will take a set of unrelated programs and put them together under one roof.

Unlike the Office of Exploration, created by NASA after the first President Bush announced his Moon/Mars program in 1989, this new office will not do viewgraph-based planning, but will run existing programs. This reflects the fact that NASA will not be getting much additional funding.

Admiral Steidle said during a telephone discussion with reporters, that his office will be staffed and funded by shifting most of the \$11 billion the President said would be "reprogrammed" from the current projected five-year budget. The office will run the Orbital Space Plane program, which will be reformulated as a Crew Exploration Vehicle; Project *Prometheus*, which is developing small-scale unmanned nuclear propulsion technology; and development of a next-generation launch vehicle, to replace the Space Shuttle.

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## LaRouche First On Conn. Ballot by Petition

Democratic Presidential Pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche won his rightful place on the March 2 Connecticut Democratic Presidential Primary ballot on Jan. 21, when Connecticut's Secretary of State stopped the count of LaRouche's petitions early, and admitted that LaRouche had more registered Democratic signers than needed.

Under heavy pressure by Connecticut

Sen. Joe Lieberman, a leader of the organized crime-funded wing of the Democratic Party, the Democratic Secretary of State, Susan Bysiewicz, made a fool of herself on Dec. 19 by refusing to place LaRouche on the ballot with the other Democratic candidates, as meeting the state's criterion of "generally recognized and advocated by the media." Major candidate LaRouche, who ranks second among Democrats in the number of individual contributions, was therefore the only candidate required to collect 6,235 signatures of registered Democratic voters to gain ballot status.

Connecticut's ballot access requirements are among the most onerous in the nation. In 1992, the ACLU sued the state to overturn them, on behalf of LaRouche, former Sen. Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.), and others, and won in Federal court only to have the ruling overturned by the Federal Court of Appeals.

In a four-week period which included the coldest day in the Northeast in 10 years, LaRouche's supporters collected 12,527 signatures, and divided and delivered them to more than 100 different Democratic registrars throughout the state during a three-hour legal "window" on Jan. 16. Connecticut's petition period also overlapped that of New York State, where LaRouche gathered and filed 58,000 signatures on Jan. 2.

LaRouche appears to be the *only* Presidential candidate who has ever successfully petitioned for ballot status in Connecticut. At *EIR* press time, the Secretary of State's spokesman said he "did not know [whether anyone else had ever done it] . . . and it would take several weeks to find out."

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## Drive Starts To Recall D.C. Mayor

Organizers on Jan. 20 filed on official "notice of intent" with the District of Columbia Board of Elections and Ethics, thus launching a drive to recall Mayor Anthony Williams. Williams shut down the city's only public hospital, D.C. General Hospital, on behalf of Wall Street's dictator over the capital's finances, the Financial Control Board (FCB), in 2001. The notice says that

Williams' "malfeasance, misfeasance, and nonfeasance endangered the well-being and even the very lives of District residents."

The chairman of the D.C. Democratic Party attacked the recall and its chief organizer, Barbara Lett Simmons. Simmons is one of D.C.'s representatives on the Democratic National Committee, as well as being the senior member of the State Committee. She is also a former chairman of the D.C. Board of Education.

Recall organizers cite the Mayor's shutdown of D.C. General, cuts in funding for education, and 12,000 homeless residents; while Williams is at the same time courting major real estate developers, building a \$1 billion convention center, and trying to get a major league baseball team into the city.

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## NASA Cancels Hubble Service Mission

The scientific community was disappointed last year when NASA cancelled the sixth Shuttle servicing mission to the Hubble Space Telescope, in 2010, and decided to deorbit the Hubble then instead. But they were confident that the fifth servicing mission, scheduled for 2006, would proceed. On Jan. 16, Administrator Sean O'Keefe announced that the 2006 mission has been cancelled. That mission was to install two new scientific instruments (already built, at a cost of \$200 million), and replace its failing gyroscopes, which keep it pointed at its astronomical targets. There is no way to know how long Hubble will be able to function without that servicing mission.

Former Shuttle astronaut, Hubble servicing mission veteran, and current NASA chief scientist John Grunsfeld explained that cost was not (directly) the issue in cancelling the Hubble mission. In order to meet the safety requirements laid out by the Columbia Accident Investigation Board, astronauts will have to be able to inspect and repair the Shuttle while in orbit. Technology is being developed to do that at the space station, but not for a stand-alone Shuttle mission. If that capability didn't exist, the board stated, a second orbiter would have to be on the launch pad

**PATRIOT ACT** was denounced by the Los Angeles City Council on Jan. 21, the day after President Bush demanded that Congress extend that Act. The Los Angeles resolution calls the law anti-American, and says that it encourages racial profiling. Los Angeles is the largest city in the country to come out against the Patriot Act, and joins over 230 other localities which have already passed similar resolutions.

**CHIEF JUSTICE** Antonin Scalia was challenged by the *Los Angeles Times* on Jan. 16, concerning his duck-hunting trip with his friend Dick Cheney, just three weeks after accepting the case *in re* Richard B. Cheney to be argued in April, concerning Cheney's coverup of his energy dealings with Enron in 2001 as head of the White House energy task force. Scalia responded: "I do not think my impartiality could reasonably be questioned."

**9/11 LEAKS** probe by the Justice Department is said now to focus on Sen. Richard C. Shelby (R-Ala.), who was the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence at the time of the disclosure, according to the Jan. 21 *Washington Post's* Congressional sources. The investigation centers on the disclosure in 2002 that the NSA had intercepted two warning messages on the eve of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

**SEGREGATION** in American schools has returned to the level of 1969, after Martin Luther King was killed. According to a study by Harvard University's Civil Rights Project, after peaking in the 1980s, school integration began to slide backwards such that today, many white students have "little contact" with minority students in many areas of the country.

Moreover, hundreds of "new segregated and unequal schools" have appeared in the suburbs, resulting from large migration of both black and Hispanic families into these areas.

to rescue the astronauts were there a problem, which is unfeasible.

In fact, according to President Bush's plan, the Shuttle will be "retired" in 2010, leaving no justification for spending the money to develop the means to inspect and repair an orbiter on its own, Grunsfeld admitted. "If we had plans to fly the Space Shuttle for another 15 years, this is an investment that we might have made to develop for all those rescue scenarios," he said. Said NASA spokesman Glenn Mahone, "It was a tough and painful decision, but given where we are now in terms of the flight of the Space Shuttle and the context of the national space policy outlined by President Bush, it was a decision we had to make."

Astrophysicists had hoped that Hubble could remain on station until at least 2011, when the Webb Space Telescope is scheduled to be launched. Hubble's images in visible wavelengths could then have been combined with Webb's observations in the infrared, to carry out the kind of multi-wavelength astronomy Lyndon LaRouche has promoted, in studying the Crab Nebula.

## Groups Ask Criminal Probe of Ashcroft

A call was launched on Jan. 15 for appointment of a special prosecutor to start a criminal probe of Attorney General John Ashcroft's violation of Federal campaign finance law during his 2000 Senate campaign, and his possible tax evasion. A coalition of public interest groups said FEC documents show that Ashcroft knowingly accepted a fundraising mailing list developed by his political action committee, which constituted an illegal, excessive contribution of at least \$255,000—in direct violation of Federal campaign finance law. In addition, while Ashcroft told the FEC that he personally owned the mailing list, he failed to disclose it as an asset on a required report to the Senate, the groups said. Moreover, he may have engaged in tax evasion, by failing to report income earned from the list on his IRS income tax filings.

"There can be no doubt that the appoint-

ment of an outside special counsel is required in this case to fully investigate potential criminal actions implicating the United States Attorney General himself," the groups stated in their letter to Deputy Attorney General James Comey. The coalition includes the National Voting Rights Institute, Public Citizen, and others.

## Kerry Confronted With The Cheney Question

At a Jan. 22 speech at Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, Presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry was twice urged—by passionate supporters of candidate Lyndon LaRouche—to take seriously the necessity to remove Vice President Dick Cheney from office. LaRouche Youth Movement organizer Eric Thomas, with the tense silence of a large audience broken only by some Baby Boomers' cries of protest, told Kerry, "LaRouche knows that you can't ignore the threat that VP Dick Cheney poses to the nation, because when it came to spreading the lies about the yellow cake, that was Cheney, not Bush. When it came to bullying the CIA into faking intelligence, that was Cheney, not Bush. When it came to lying to you and the American population about the weapons of mass destruction in order to get us into war, Cheney was the one who was responsible. And it wasn't Bush's office that outed Ambassador Wilson's wife as a CIA agent, but Cheney's. I want to know why you support or don't support LaRouche's call for Cheney's impeachment."

Kerry answered Thomas, "Well, seeing as the Republicans control the House and Senate, I don't see how we'd even get a motion towards an impeachment; but I will defeat Cheney in the November elections!"

Later, LaRouche campaign activist Laurie Dobson re-posed the same question to Kerry, who responded, "I am glad that this question was asked. She raises a very good and important question which must be seriously addressed in our country right now. The need to develop specific proposals for peace, and for insuring that we do not further this idea of "clash of civilizations."