

## National News

### Spannaus exposes Hashemi cover-up

On Jan. 6, Edward Spannaus, law editor of *EIR*, submitted to Independent Counsel Lawrence E. Walsh massive documentation that the Department of Justice and FBI had covered up Iran-Contra gun-running dating back to 1980. Spannaus held a press conference in Washington to report on the contents of the dossier, centering on court documents describing activities surrounding the late gun-dealer Cyrus Hashemi.

Spannaus presented essentially the same documentation at a press conference over a month earlier, on Dec. 3, when he demanded that charges of obstruction of justice be brought against Justice Department officials Stephen Trott, William Weld, and the FBI's Oliver "Buck" Revell.

Spannaus was rewarded for that exposé by a federal warrant for his arrest and that of his colleague, Robert Greenberg, who participated in the same press conference. They were charged with obstruction of justice. The charges stemmed from the giant Oct. 6 police raid on *EIR* and other offices operated by associates of Lyndon H. LaRouche, to whom Spannaus serves as legal adviser.

The two spent 16 days in jail before being granted bail.

This time, however, Spannaus's press conference was being held the same day that important parts of the Hashemi story were breaking in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Baltimore Sun*.

### U.S. News says it's time to act on AIDS

*U.S. News and World Report* editor-in-chief Mortimer Zuckerman gave a tentative endorsement to mandatory AIDS screening in the magazine's Jan. 12 issue. Its cover story is devoted to the deadly pandemic.

One week earlier, the magazine (circulation 8 million) had published the results of a poll which showed that 67% of those queried believe that AIDS will become an "extremely urgent" problem in 1987.

The latest editorial, entitled "AIDS: A Crisis Ignored," states: "AIDS may be on the verge of 'breaking out,'" and, says Zuckerman, "There may well be panic. . . . Now . . . is the time for political leadership to form public policy."

Arguing, "We have to go further than education," Zuckerman asserts: "There is a serious case for blood testing to identify carriers of the AIDS virus. . . . What about mandatory testing?"

"Does government responsibility for the public welfare carry with it an obligation to alert the infected and the uninfected populations about the presence of the disease? There is precedence for mandatory testing to detect venereal disease that is nowhere near as deadly as AIDS—for example, to secure marriage licenses.

"Opponents would argue that mandatory testing carries with it Orwellian overtones of government intrusion into an individual's most intimate privacy. So it does. But consider the opposition position: Has anyone a right to a privacy that menaces public health?"

### Massachusetts judge doubled welfare payments

A Superior Court judge in Massachusetts has ordered that state to double its welfare payments. In his ruling, the judge stated that nearly doubling welfare benefits would permit recipients to pay their rents and not be counted among the homeless.

Superior Court Judge Charles M. Grabau ordered state Welfare Commissioner Charles Atkins to implement a new "standard of assistance" that would boost benefits for a family of three from the current \$476 a month to as much as \$926 a month, including food stamps.

Last year, Grabau had ruled that the Welfare Commissioner was violating a 1913 state law requiring a standard of assistance generous enough to allow recipients to raise their children in their own homes.

Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis (D), a potential 1988 presidential candidate who boasts of the state's economic progress, said the ruling would be appealed.

According to Massachusetts Senate

Ways and Means Chairman Pat McGovern, (D-Lawrence), there is no way the state can afford the ruling, nor is the ruling binding. "It flies in the face of 300 years of legislative history," he insisted.

### Solarz meets with Philippine rebels

Rep. Steven Solarz (D-N.Y.) met secretly with top communist rebel officials on Jan. 4 in the Philippines, U.S. government and Filipino rebel spokesmen both revealed the following day. It is the first known contact between Philippines' communist insurgents and American officials.

Solarz played a spearheading role in the Reagan administration's overthrow of President Ferdinand Marcos in February 1986.

National Democratic Front spokesman Antonio Zumel indicated that Solarz was told during the two-hour meeting that the communists are committed to the removal of strategic U.S. air and naval bases in the Philippines and to armed struggle to take government power. He said that Solarz had requested the meeting, and asked that it be "off the record."

### Brzezinski wants new 'policy-shapers'

"The United States needs to change the current shapers of U.S. foreign policy, replacing them with a new machine that gives an impression of renewal and demonstrates the renewed capabilities of the President in steering the country," Zbigniew Brzezinski told the Italian financial weekly *Il Mondo* on Jan. 5. "If this is not done, the alternative is that within six months there will be a change of President in the United States.

"I believe that this eventuality is not to be excluded because of the health condition of the President. . . . The accumulation of different factors could bring the resignation of Ronald Reagan and the naming of George Bush. . . ."

Brzezinski, who as national security adviser to Jimmy Carter was the architect of

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the U.S. "Islamic fundamentalist card" policy, says such a change in foreign policy would create the preconditions for a partial arms-control agreement with the Soviets and a more active mediation in the Middle East (modeled on the Kissinger Sinai negotiations). Brzezinski also welcomes the possibility of naming Howard Baker or James Baker as new secretary of state, and he proposes replacing Paul Volcker at the Federal Reserve.

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## Weinberger: We will deploy the SDI

"SDI should be deployed as soon as research shows its feasibility and its ability to carry out the goals the President has set forth from the beginning," Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger said Jan. 5.

His statement affirmed that the anti-missile program has made great progress. Speaking at a press conference where he disclosed details of the Pentagon's proposed budgets for fiscal years 1988 and 1989, Weinberger also warned Congress:

"Negative growth in defense funding levels, as experienced in the last few years, will place at risk not only the military improvements achieved with prior-year funding investments, but our future security as well."

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## U.S. asks heavy jail term for Israeli spy

Prosecutors for the U.S. Justice Department have asked a federal judge to impose a "substantial" jail sentence and a fine on Jonathan Jay Pollard, convicted last year of spying for Israel. "This is a case wherein the facts are so compelling as to warrant the imposition of a substantial period of incarceration and a monetary fine," court papers filed on Jan. 6 stated.

The document detailed Pollard's contacts with Israeli Col. Aviem Sella, who, prosecutors said, recruited Pollard to "exploit, on behalf of Israel, the 'holes' in the U.S. intelligence system."

The prosecutors also told the court that Pollard's initial refusal to cooperate with U.S. authorities had enabled his co-conspirators to escape, that he has "expressed no remorse," and that his actions had done untold damage to U.S. national security.

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## Byrd says he backs the SDI

New Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W. Va.) hinted in a television interview Jan. 4 that the U.S. House of Representatives may be willing to give stronger backing to the Strategic Defense Initiative than it has in the past.

Appearing on ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley," Byrd was asked whether he would support the administration's SDI funding request for fiscal year 1988—62% higher than the amount Congress allocated in the current fiscal year.

"I'm a supporter of the Strategic Defense Initiative," was Byrd's response.

Pressed on how the Pentagon's request for \$500 million in supplemental SDI funds is likely to fare on Capitol Hill, Byrd answered: "I'm for whatever is needed. I'm not saying that we will cut it, or that we won't."

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## Weinberger hits Congress on defense spending

Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger attacked congressional critics of the administration's proposed FY88 defense budget, saying they "haven't even got the slightest idea of what's in it."

"It's kind of an automatic knee-jerk reaction," Weinberger said in an interview on the CBS "Morning News" Jan. 5. "If we had gone in with a 5% reduction, I'm sure there would be those who would say it ought to be 10%."

The administration is seeking a \$312 billion for defense, down \$8 billion from what the administration asked for in the current fiscal year.

## Briefly

● **STEPHEN TROTT**, who may face cover-up charges in the Iran-Contra affair, may soon be leaving the Justice Department, according to a report in the *Washington Times*' "Insight" magazine. California Gov. George Deukmejian has reportedly offered the embattled assistant attorney general a seat on the California Supreme Court. According to well-placed sources, Trott does not deny that the offer has been made, and does not deny that he is considering accepting the offer.

● **FEDERAL HEALTH** officials have begun testing anonymous blood samples from hospital patients around the country to determine the extent of the spread of AIDS. Dr. Timothy Dondero, chief of the surveillance and evaluation branch of the Centers for Disease Control's AIDS program, said the testing would be done for "statistical purposes only, to get a sense of how much infection there is in the population."

● **MARC TANNENBAUM**, international affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, is blamed by American Jewish leaders for sabotaging John Cardinal O'Connor's trip to the Middle East. Rabbi Tannenbaum leaked to the *New York Times* comments privately made to him by O'Connor, concerning the latter's desire to mediate in the Arab-Israeli conflict. "That led pro-Arab officials in the Vatican Secretariat of State to order the cardinal to cancel his meetings with high Israeli officials" in Jerusalem, says the *Washington Post*.

● **THE BENEDICTINE** Order has expelled 15 of its members in San Francisco because they are dying of AIDS, the West German daily *Bild Zeitung* reported on Jan. 7. The Order has offered to pay their health insurance premiums, however. European Benedictine leaders are reportedly "concerned" about this spread of AIDS within the Order.