

National News

Aerospace group defends Department of Commerce

In its August/September newsletter, the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) carried a front-page defense of the U.S. Commerce Department. The Gingrichites in Congress are pushing for the total elimination of that department, among others.

AIA Vice President Joel Johnson wrote that the Commerce Department "historically has had the expertise needed to represent industry and service sectors [at the cabinet level]. The loss of experienced personnel and data on specific industries and services would reduce the ability of the government to understand the impact of potential policies on those industry and service sectors. . . .

"The Commerce Department's International Trade Administration, its Commercial Service, and particularly its secretary, have played a critical role in the success of a number of recent sales campaigns by our companies. . . .

"We believe that there continues to be a need for a cabinet-level agency primarily devoted to the competitiveness of U.S. industry in the global marketplace."

Puerto Rican terrorists threaten anti-drug radar

Two Puerto Rican mayors threatened in mid-August to carry out acts of "civil disobedience" to stop the installation of a new U.S. Navy anti-drug radar, one in the city of Lajas, and one on the island of Vieques.

The two are the mayor of Ponce, the second largest city on the island, and the mayor of Lajas. Both have told the press that they will lie down in the streets to stop the installation of the anti-drug radar, even if it means that "U.S. Marines go over us and kill us." Opposition to the radar is also coming from the Rev. Santana Melecio, the head of the New Pro-Independence Movement (NMI) of Puerto Rico, which was recently created by former members of the defunct, pro-terrorist Puerto Rican Socialist

Party and which is linked to Fidel Castro's São Paulo Forum.

In July, Julio Muriente, acting director of *Claridad*, the semi-official weekly newspaper of the NMI, told a public rally that the anti-drug radar should be stopped at any cost, adding, "Puerto Ricans know how to blow up towers," a clear reference to the radar towers. Former Puerto Rican Gov. Carlos Romero Barcelo responded sharply, "Among those who are against the radar in Lajas are pro-Independence followers and drug traffickers, who have personal, economic, and political motives."

The anti-drug radar is the third component of a sophisticated network known as "Relocatable Over-the-Horizon Radar," whose central command post is in Chesapeake, Virginia. The Puerto Rican site will be able to detect and track any plane taking off from anywhere in the Caribbean, and deep into South America.

Billington seeks to bar Virginia AG from case

An attorney representing imprisoned LaRouche associate Michael Billington told a federal judge in Richmond, Virginia that the Virginia Attorney General's office was guilty of gross misconduct in Billington's case and should be disqualified from any further involvement in the matter. Billington was convicted of "securities" violations in a political railroad trial.

At an Aug. 25 hearing, defense attorney Gerald T. Zerkin told Judge Richard Williams that members of the Attorney General's staff, including Senior Assistant Attorney General John Russell, withheld exculpatory evidence, put on false testimony, and prevented Billington from getting a fair trial in the state in 1990, which resulted in Billington's being slapped with a 77-year sentence that has triggered international outrage. Billington is now seeking relief via a federal *habeas corpus* appeal.

Zerkin told the court that prosecutors believed their misconduct would never be discovered because they had successfully concealed relevant documents. However, Billington's defense team has since been

able to obtain documents under the Freedom of Information Act, and by other investigations, which prove that prosecutors lied all along. Additional evidence surfaced during the federal kidnapping investigation of a central prosecution figure, former Loudoun County Sheriff's Lt. Don Moore. The FBI tape recorded more than 60 hours of conversations, in which Moore admitted to engaging in illegal searches and seizures, illegal wiretaps, witness tampering, and other violations in Billington's and other LaRouche-related prosecutions. Four other associates of LaRouche—Anita and Paul Gallagher, Don Phau, and Laurence Hecht—are also wrongfully imprisoned in the state on "securities" charges.

Zerkin also gave the judge an oral preview of many of the issues presented in Billington's *habeas* petition. Judge Williams took the motion under advisement and ordered the AG to respond by Sept. 20 to Billington's *habeas* petition.

Police say 'Post' endangers D.C. mayor

The District of Columbia's police chief has asked the *Washington Post* to stop endangering the life of Mayor Marion Barry, with its articles highlighting the security measures at his private residence. In a letter to the *Post* on Aug. 16, interim Chief of Police Larry D. Soulsby cited "numerous threats" received by the mayor. Soulsby said the *Post*'s latest article "has forced me to increase our security measures, diverting money and police officers from our crime-fighting efforts" to protect the mayor's life.

The *Post* has been attacking Mayor Barry's personal security arrangements for several months, most recently in a July 26 front-page article, which, Chief Soulsby said in his letter, "discussed matters pertaining to security, [and] went beyond the bounds of responsible journalism." The article on the mayor's home "gave the building's address and provided a diagram of the home's various rooms." Soulsby concluded, "I ask the *Post* to refrain from any additional articles that bear on the mayor's security, especially those that discuss specific security measures."

Briefly

● **HENRY KISSINGER** said in an interview with CNN on Aug. 30 that the nation of Bosnia-Herzegovina "should never have been created," and it "makes no sense to force Serbs, Croats, and Muslims, who have demonstrated their hatred of each other, to live in the same political community."

● **TEST SCORES** for the Scholastic Aptitude Test rose in 1995 after the test was radically redesigned to make it easier. The new test has fewer questions, eliminates difficult antonym questions in the verbal section, and encourages students to use calculators for the math. Officials of the College Board, which administers the test, hailed the rising scores as "early signs of a turnaround in education."

● **ONE MILLION** Americans lost health insurance during the past year, according to a study by the non-partisan Employee Benefit Research Institute in Washington. The study, which has been picked up by the Clinton administration as a weapon in the upcoming congressional budget battle, projects that, under GOP budget cuts, 9 million more Americans will be tossed off the health insurance rolls by 2002.

● **SEN. PHIL GRAMM** of Texas tied front-runner presidential candidate Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas with 2,582 votes for 24% of the vote in an Iowa straw poll on Aug. 21 sponsored by the Republican Party. The Gramm campaign and other cash-rich campaigns bought up blocks of tickets, and gave them to their recruited supporters, along with free plane or bus tickets.

● **THE TULSA WORLD** of Aug. 21 reported on Schiller Institute organizers' circulation of the "Open Letter to President Clinton" calling for him to exonerate Lyndon LaRouche, to attendees at the Southern Legislative Conference in Tulsa the week before. So far, 500 state legislators, among other elected officials and prominent figures internationally, have signed the open letter.

Senate briefed on 'loose Russian nukes'

On Aug. 23, the European subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, chaired by Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), was told by Graham Allison, former assistant secretary of defense for plans and policy, that the threat of "loose nukes and loose weapons-grade usable nuclear material [from the states of the former Soviet Union] is the number-one threat to American vital interests today." He added that "the actions of the U.S. government and the Russian government are not remotely proportional to the problem."

Allison also said that the United States "as the most open society in the world, is also the most vulnerable to [terrorist nuclear] attack," although he hastened to add that he thought such attacks were more likely in Russia or the Middle East.

U.S. to arm Bosnia if peace bid fails

The Bosnian press agency TWRA said on Aug. 22 that the Clinton administration will deliver arms to the Bosnian government and organize training for the Bosnian Army if the latest peace plan fails. The agency cites a report in the Aug. 28 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*.

The weekly wrote that the United States has informed its allies that if the renewed peace efforts do not succeed, the administration will provide arms and training to the Bosnian government. The "talking points" used by National Security Adviser Anthony Lake in his recent diplomatic swing through Europe state that, if a "last, best, all-out effort to get an agreement" fails to win over the Bosnian Serbs, Clinton will try to persuade the U.N. Security Council to lift the arms embargo. "In any event," says the document, "we would provide arms, training and support to help level the playing field." The United States would also encourage formation of a new international fighting force to assist the Bosnian government.

U.S. News said that Washington would expect NATO to continue to enforce a no-fly zone over Bosnia and to protect safe areas for nine months, while the Bosnian Army was being armed and trained with better weapons. "If Serbia intervenes on [the Bosnian Serbs'] behalf, we will bomb Serbian forces and prevent their use of air power inside Bosnia, including hot pursuit . . . if required," the document used by Lake states.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic said on Aug. 13 that the U.S. plan includes threats that Clinton would withdraw his veto of the arms embargo bill, and carry out air strikes against the Serbs.

DuPont committed fraud in tests, court rules

The DuPont Corp. was fined \$101 million by a federal judge in Georgia for withholding test data and misrepresenting results, in a case over their fungicide Benlate DF, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on Aug. 23.

Over the past decade, thousands of farmers lost all their crops after spraying Benlate DF. The evidence showed that the fungicide was contaminated with an ultra-toxic herbicide. After paying out some \$500 million to settle claims for damaged crops, DuPont stopped payments two years ago, claiming new evidence showed Benlate was not at fault. In fact, the evidence submitted by private labs to DuPont proved the herbicides were present in the soil samples. DuPont withheld this evidence in subsequent trials.

Judge Robert Elliott issued a blistering 79-page opinion that stated that there was a "clear pattern of concealment and misrepresentation. . . . Put in layman's terms, DuPont cheated. And it cheated consciously, deliberately and with purpose. DuPont has committed a fraud in this court."

The severity of the fine and the opinion are unprecedented, the *Journal* said. The judge offered to drop the fine if DuPont would place advertisements in national newspapers acknowledging their "wrongdoing." DuPont has accused the judge of bias and says it intends to place an emergency appeal.