

National News

Cato Institute hails pending govt. shutdown

On Sept. 5, the Cato Institute, a conservative Washington think-tank, hosted a forum entitled "Is a Budget Train Wreck Inevitable?" which featured, among others, former Rep. Tim Penny (D-Minn.), now with the Humphrey Institute, and Conservative Revolution ideologue William Kristol. Moderator Stephen Moore offered, in his opening remarks, the view that it would be a good thing if all but "essential government services" were to shut down on Oct. 1 as a result of a budget conflict between President Clinton and the Republican-led Congress. Carl Cannon, the White House correspondent for the *Baltimore Sun*, added that "there are plenty of Republicans in the Congress who think that \$5 trillion in debt is enough and that shutting down the government would be good."

Both Kristol and Penny said that a "train wreck" on Oct. 1, the beginning of fiscal 1996, or in November, when the debt ceiling is due to be raised, is unlikely, however, because there's enough common ground for the President and Congress to reach a compromise.

Phil 'Grammstands' on Bosnia policy

Trying to come up with some reason to criticize the NATO air strikes in Bosnia, which he claims to agree with, Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.) dismissed the air strikes saying that they cannot be decisive, in remarks to ABC News on Sept. 3. Gramm, who is running for President, said that only ground troops—which he opposes being sent by the United States—could be decisive, and accused President Clinton of wanting "from the very beginning" to get the United States involved in Bosnia. Instead, he said, the arms embargo should be lifted.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) responded: "I disagree. . . . Obviously, air power will not end this conflict. There is a need for troops on the ground. But there are

over 100,000 troops on the ground. They're Bosnians, and all they need is the weapons to fight back."

Lieberman said that he thinks the Senate vote to lift the arms embargo was a factor, "together with the Croatian action in Krajina, that has led to the change of heart and the strong NATO action last week." Lieberman said that he would be for lifting the embargo any time the measure came before the Senate, but that he is not sure the votes now exist to override the presidential veto. "If we have the votes to override the President's veto," said Lieberman, "I think we should vote quickly, because it is part of the whole context of not only doing what's right and letting these people defend themselves, but to continue to put pressure on the Serbs."

Noriega: Bush cut dirty deals to convict me

Anti-drug fighter Panamanian Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega filed a motion for a retrial on Aug. 31, based on new evidence that the government of George Bush cut secret deals with the Cali, Colombia cocaine cartel to secure his conviction. General Noriega has been in a Miami prison since he surrendered to the U.S. invasion force in late December 1989.

According to the *Washington Post*, the motion charges that in order to convict General Noriega, the Bush prosecution secured a sentence reduction for trafficker Luis Santacruz Echeverri, brother of one of the Cali Cartel's top seven kingpins, in return for the cartel's squeezing a Medellin Cartel trafficker, Richard Bilonick, to testify against Noriega: The cartel offered Bilonick "silver or lead," i.e., take \$1 million and do the job, or you and your family will be killed.

The general's motion is based on newly uncovered letters written to the prosecution in 1991 by the lawyer for Santacruz Echeverri, Joel Rosenthal. In one letter, Rosenthal reminds prosecutors that his client wishes to get "credit" for Bilonick's surrender and testimony, and adds: "Remember the appearance will be that you have made a deal with the Cali Cartel to secure the cooperation and specific testimony of a witness against the Medellin Cartel."

Santacruz's sentence was reduced from 23 to 14 years, but the details of what he offered the government, were sealed. Noriega's attorneys, in the new motion, seek to unseal those deals, and interview prosecutors about their contacts with the Cali Cartel. Bilonick walked practically free, despite admitting to having smuggled 22 tons of cocaine into the United States.

Rosenthal, a former federal prosecutor in Miami, was named in the Clinton administration's June indictment of the Cali Cartel as one of three U.S. lawyers who pled guilty to drug-money laundering.

'Get LaRouche' gang loses one, wins one

Herb Bryant, a member of the Virginia private branch of the federal, state, and local concert of action to jail U.S. statesman Lyndon LaRouche and his associates, was sentenced to a jail term of six months, by federal Judge Royce Lamberth, on Aug. 31. Bryant had founded a private "law-enforcement" agency called Armed Response Group U.S. (ARGUS), along with Loudoun County, Va. Sheriff John Isom, which had provided an armored personnel carrier to the 400-man Oct. 6-7, 1986 paramilitary raid against publications associated with LaRouche.

Bryant had been convicted in a Washington, D.C. federal court of impersonating an officer (U.S. Marshal), after being caught in his stationwagon with guns outside a hotel where an Israeli delegation was staying. He tried to explain away the weapons to D.C. police by claiming that he was a Deputy U.S. Marshal.

Another member of the private wing of the "Get LaRouche" strike force, Anti-Defamation League (ADL) National Commissioner Murray Janus, was acquitted on Aug. 30 of a charge that he bribed his law partner's client not to pursue her allegation that the partner had attempted to sodomize her, according to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. Janus's law partner, James A. Baber III, pleaded guilty in June to a charge of attempted forcible sodomy. Under a plea agreement, the charge was reduced to a misdemeanor and he got a suspended jail term.

During 1990, Janus, with the ADL, of-

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ferred to defend Judge Clifford Weckstein, who was presiding over the state "LaRouche" cases, against allegations of bias, at the same time that the ADL promoted the idea to Weckstein of electing a Jewish justice to the Virginia Supreme Court. Weckstein ultimately handed down barbaric sentences ranging from 10 to 77 years.

Wine counterfeiting scandal rocks trade

Wine trade circuits are abuzz with news that a certain wine-counterfeiting operation in New York may be busted soon, which could lead investigating authorities to connections with world famous wine critic Robert Parker.

According to source reports, the owners of Royal Wine Merchants in New York City are being challenged by a major client, on the \$100,000 worth of 1949 Chateau Cheval Blanc they sold him. Cheval Blanc is one of the most prized red wines of Bordeaux, and bottles of this vintage could sell for thousands of dollars each. Rather than keeping them as a speculative investment, as expected, the client evidently decided to open some of the bottles, only to discover that the wine was some cheap red. The store is reportedly known to have purchased significant amounts of inexpensive French blends sold under the Dourthe Frères label, one found in many supermarkets.

One source said that Cheval Blanc labels for the wine could have been forged without great difficulty.

Conservative think-tank wracked by infighting

One of the principal think-tanks of the Conservative Revolution has been split by infighting over the past several weeks, according to the Sept. 7 issue of the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*. Since June, 15 staffers out of 25 have resigned from the Center for the Study of Popular Culture. This center has received huge amounts of funding from the John M. Olin and the Scaife Family

Foundations.

The staffers who resigned worked for the Individual Rights Foundation, which was housed inside the Center. Led by John Howard, the Individual Rights Foundation drafted the "Wise Use" strategy to use property rights and states' rights arguments to undermine the national policymaking powers of the federal government. The strategy has been picked up by several counties in Nevada, Colorado, and Utah to contest government ownership of federal lands in the West.

The "right-wing" Center was founded by former radical leftists David Horowitz and Peter Collier. Horowitz supported the Individual Rights Foundation's land-rights program as part of "the center's efforts to scale back the authority of government over the individual." Horowitz had told the *Chronicle* earlier, "It's part of the power-to-the-people movement."

One Whitewater charge dropped against Tucker

A federal judge in Little Rock, Arkansas, dismissed an indictment against Gov. Jim Guy Tucker and two other men, on Sept. 6, ruling that Whitewater special prosecutor Kenneth Starr had exceeded his jurisdiction, and had brought charges against Tucker and the other defendants that had nothing to do with the case assigned him. Judge Henry Woods said that the charges against Tucker were "not only insufficiently related [to Whitewater] . . . they were not related at all."

The three were indicted in June for loan fraud, and for what Starr called a scheme to devalue a cable TV business to avoid millions of dollars in capital gains taxes upon its sale.

Starr said he would immediately appeal the trial court's decision.

Tucker told reporters that Starr "clearly isn't through with me yet," referring to a second indictment against him returned in August. In that indictment, Tucker is charged along with James McDougal and McDougal's former wife, who were partners with the Clintons in the Whitewater real estate investment, and with David Hale.

● **WISCONSIN'S** State Supreme Court granted a preliminary injunction blocking the state from providing tax-financed tuition vouchers for children to attend parochial schools on Aug. 25. Vouchers and other "education choice" methods have been used to privatize public education.

● **CFC REPLACEMENTS** may be toxic to plant life, according to a study published in the July 27 issue of *Nature*. Dr. Tracey Tromp and colleagues from Atmospheric and Environmental Research, Inc. (AER) in Massachusetts, warn that the leading replacements for the refrigerant chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), HFCs and HCFCs, react with atmospheric oxygen and produce a toxic compound in high concentrations. After an international environmentalist campaign, CFCs are being banned globally.

● **SENATOR** Carol Moseley-Braun (D-Ill.) questioned whether "African-American elected officials [are] more subject to scrutiny" after the Aug. 23 conviction of Rep. Mel Reynolds (D-Ill.) on charges of having sexual relations with a minor. "I think the answer to that is yes," she said, adding that she has raised the question with Attorney General Janet Reno, who is reviewing the Justice Department's file on the issue.

● **U.S. AIRLINES** may lose their tax exemption on aviation fuel taxes, when it expires on Oct. 1. Over the last two years, they have saved \$1.1 billion, thanks to the exemption of 4.3¢ per gallon, enacted by Congress. A three-year extension has been attached to the Budget Reconciliation Bill, which is facing a presidential veto.

● **MARIA MERRY BAKER** blasted food cartel company Archer Daniels Midland in a lively hour-long radio broadcast in Kansas on Aug. 24. The *EIR* editor also particularly warned against the Orwellian "Freedom to Farm Act," which would end all kind of supports to farmers.