

National News

Mayors call for Africa to get debt relief

The 1,000 members of U.S. Conference of Mayors, at its 66th annual meeting in Reno, Nevada, last month, adopted a resolution calling on the President and Congress to provide leadership in working toward significant debt reduction and cancellation of debt owed by the poorest African countries. The resolution stressed that Africa's "crushing debt burden inhibits trade and is crippling the lives of Africa's people."

The motivation points out: "Many African countries spend more on debt repayment to bilateral government creditors, multilateral agencies like the International Monetary Fund and others than they do on education and health care, spending more than one-quarter of their total export earnings on debt servicing." It said that while "the highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) debt relief initiative sponsored by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund provides recognition of the debt crisis, it is not a comprehensive strategy to deal with this burden, has so far only benefitted a handful of African countries and does not provide for definitive debt cancellation, which is necessary if Africa's cities are to achieve economic growth and engage in mutually beneficial trade that can create jobs in the U.S. and Africa."

Hispanic LULAC confab hears Texas Gov. Bush

Texas Gov. George W. Bush and House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) addressed the national convention of the League of United Latin American Citizens on July 1. LULAC is the largest political grouping of Hispanic-Americans in the nation. Bush, who has his eye on the Presidency, peppered his contentless speech with Spanish in order to draw applause, and endorsed bilingual education and a friendlier Mexico policy. House Democratic Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) spoke the following day, and attacked the Republicans as "the most

anti-immigrant, the most anti-Hispanic party in the history of this country."

In 45 U.S. Congressional Districts, Hispanics represent 20% of the voting-age population. The Democratic Party has targeted 15 of those House seats currently held by Republicans. According to Rep. Martin Frost (R-Tex.), chairman of the GOP House campaign committee, the Hispanic vote could either keep the Republicans in control of the House or swing power to the Democrats. With such GOP proposals as those in the bellwether state of California, which deny welfare to immigrants, end bilingual education and affirmative action, and declare English the nation's official language, Hispanic voters have cooled to GOP candidates. Many eligible Hispanics are registering to vote, which usually indicates a Democratic swing.

Denver court ruling hits prosecutor deals

Citing the law which prohibits anyone from giving or offering anything of value in exchange for testimony, the 10th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in Denver ruled in early July, that it is illegal for Federal prosecutors to offer leniency to a witness in exchange for testimony. The court said that this amounts to buying testimony.

"This is a bombshell," a Denver defense attorney was quoted by the press. "This hits the government right where they live. This is how the government is operating, and we have said for 40 years, if you say to someone in criminal trouble, 'I'll give you a free pass, or I'll let you go if you tell me the story I want to hear,' they'll tell you whatever they need to say to get out of trouble." A former U.S. Attorney in Denver, Mike Norton, said that if this decision stands, it will have "a tremendously negative impact on the ability of the government to prosecute crimes by groups," since prosecutors normally work their way up the chain of command in an organization, offering immunity or plea-bargains to lower-level participants in exchange for testimony against their superiors.

"Somewhere tonight there is indigestion in the Department of Justice," said Stephen Jones, who was the attorney for Michael Mc-

Veigh, Timothy McVeigh's brother, who was convicted in the Oklahoma City bombing case. His conviction is likely to be affected by the ruling.

Pat Robertson endorses 'friendship with China'

Televangelist Pat Robertson endorsed U.S. engagement with China, in a commentary for the *Wall Street Journal* on June 30, under the headline, "Friendship with China Is a Moral Imperative." He called the "self-righteous" China-bashing by Gary Bauer and Ralph Nader "morally irresponsible" and "politically ignorant." "The China-bashers prosper in direct mail and media campaigns, but they do not have the weight of righteousness on their side."

Robertson reported that he had found many changes in China since 1979. He said, "It is equally clear that in China, few, if any, really believe in the outmoded communist nonsense espoused by Marx and Lenin. Obviously the Chinese leadership perceives the former Soviet Union's transition to freedom as ill-conceived and chaotic. They want something more gradual." China, he added, "is a superpower and can either be made our friend or confronted as an enemy. The choice is ours."

Robertson's polemic is in line with the remarks of former President George Bush on May 28, that it would be a "big mistake" for President Clinton to cancel his scheduled trip to China. Bush and Robertson are interested in private-sector business deals with Beijing, but not state-to-state cooperation for great projects.

Gilmore 'up to his eyes' in prison labor scandal

The *Virginian-Pilot* has become the first Virginia daily to detail the illegal labor and selling practices of the Virginia Correctional Enterprises, in a June 28 story, including the involvement of Gov. Jim Gilmore (R), during his tenure as Attorney General under Gov. George Allen (R). Nationally, EIRNS broke the scandal last fall.

A GENERAL STRIKE has swept Puerto Rico, with a half-million workers protesting the government's planned sale of the telephone company to GTE and the local Banco Popular. The privatization move threatens 6,400 unionized telephone workers, who have been on strike since June 18. The general strike, the first in the U.S. commonwealth since 1934, has the support of AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

NEW YORK construction workers marched 30,000 strong in midtown Manhattan on June 30, to protest a decision by the city to award a \$33 million transit contract to a non-union company. The protest, expected to bring out only 10,000, demanded the ouster of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani (R), who is seeking to privatize many city services, and shop out others to workfare recipients at below union wages.

LAROCHE DEMOCRAT Ron Wieczorek, fresh from his bid for Congress, where he won 23% of the Democratic primary vote, is planning to run for governor of South Dakota as an independent. His running mate will be Jeanne Hanson.

CORETTA SCOTT KING held a second meeting with President Clinton to further press for the investigation into the murder of her husband, Martin Luther King. In their first meeting, the President urged Mrs. King to present her case to Attorney General Janet Reno. Reno is dragging her feet; she remarked late last month, that she doesn't want to "jump to conclusions" about the murder.

JUSTICE DEPT. RACISM was the subject of a complaint to Attorney General Janet Reno and Deputy AG Eric Holder last month, charging that minority attorneys in the Criminal Division and Office of International Affairs are routinely discriminated against. The memo states that the Criminal Division does not provide equal access to African-American attorneys in important case assignments, or in granting overseas details.

The *Pilot's* front page displays the VCE's glossy brochure for slave labor, which boasts, "Virginia Prisons. They Are Wide Open to Business." Author Laura LaFay reviews how VCE made illegal deals to produce clothing for private contractors, by violating the law that allows products of prison labor to be sold only overseas, and mandates that prisoners should be paid the minimum wage; and second, by scandalous underpricing. There are also allegations of kickbacks.

"In 1994, as U.S. diplomats talked about ending trade with China in protest of China's use of prison labor," LaFay notes, "Allen was advocating the use of prisoners here to compete."

She reveals that investigations of VCE's deal with Massachusetts businessman Edward Dovner, who had a contract to buy VCE's clothing, are under way by the state auditor, the Virginia State Police, the FBI, and now by a Federal grand jury in Richmond. Sources involved in preparation of the *Pilot* story indicated to *EIR* that there is far more to come out about the Virginia prison industry/kickback scandal. One source said that Governor Gilmore is "up to his eyeballs" in it.

Documents show ADL courted FBI chief Freeh

Documents newly obtained under the Freedom of Information Act show that the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL) was attempting to curry favor with Louis Freeh, who had just been appointed FBI director in 1993. At the time, the ADL was under investigation in San Francisco for having illegally obtained FBI files, which it used to spy on some 10,000 Americans. In addition, the 1993 Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision reversing the deportation order of John Demjanjuk blasted the ADL's self-interested effort to help the Justice Department "Nazi-hunters" frame Demjanjuk up.

The documents detail the ADL's all-out effort to court Freeh, including visits and an exchange of letters between Freeh and ADL director Abe Foxman in September 1993. During that time, Foxman wrote to Freeh, offering an honorarium to travel to Los

Angeles to keynote the ADL's biggest annual fundraising event on Nov. 8. Freeh responded that he would be unable to attend. On April 21, 1994, the ADL's Washington lobbyist Jess Hordes invited Freeh to attend an awards dinner in New York City on June 8, where Freeh was to receive the Klinghoffer award on behalf of the FBI's Joint Task Force on Terrorism. Again, Freeh claimed schedule conflict, but sent a representative.

In 1994, the FBI formally closed its investigation of the ADL spying, which had included passing on classified Bureau documents to foreign governments. Six months earlier the ADL succeeded in striking a plea with the San Francisco District Attorney's office, to avert criminal prosecution.

Newt backs IMF funding, infuriates GOP chiefs

House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) came out backing some funding for the International Monetary Fund, during a press conference on June 25. According to the Capitol Hill newspaper *Roll Call*, Gingrich was urged to hold the press conference by House Agriculture Chairman Bob Smith (R-Ore.), who "lobbied leadership to fund the IMF or risk a devastating political fallout this November."

Newt's remark on the IMF has other Republican leaders steamed, especially Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Tex.) and Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-Tex.). *Roll Call* wrote: "Gingrich's IMF plan is part of his broader effort to placate disgruntled business and agricultural leaders with a passel of free-trade initiatives and a capital gains tax cut." The IMF spending is expected to be debated in late July.

Gingrich called his press conference to propitiate angry farmers, who have been devastated by the GOP's monetarism and are now being driven out of business by the GOP's new farm bill, which ends price supports. Newt spun out a laundry list of measures ostensibly to help farm exports, including: support for Most Favored Nation status for China, a renewed fight for "fast track" negotiating authority for free-trade agreements, some funds for the IMF, and an exemption from sanctions for farm exports to India and Pakistan.