

# National News

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## Dem Leadership Council releases 'Blueprint'

The Democratic Leadership Council held a press conference on Sept. 23 to inaugurate their new publication called *Blueprint: Ideas for a New Century*, a "New Democrat" concoction modeled on British Prime Minister Tony Blair's Third Way. Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) described the purpose of the *Blueprint*: "to take us to a third way, to go beyond divisions and to a ground of common aspiration." DLC President Al From explained that the *Blueprint* "is part of a larger DLC strategy to make sure that our politics continue to prevail." He added that the *Blueprint* is important also for the "Third Way political movement now sweeping the world," and cited Blair's international efforts.

Included in the maiden issue is a report on a poll by an associate of disgraced former Clinton campaign adviser Dick Morris, pollster Mark Penn, which putatively shows the political identity of voters shifting to the right over the last two or three decades. Republicans are more conservative and Democrats are more centrist than in the past, with the implication being that the leadership of the Democratic Party also has to shift in order to win elections.

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## U.S. to continue work in ITER fusion program

U.S. Energy Secretary Bill Richardson issued a statement on Sept. 22 that extends U.S. participation in the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) fusion program. The agreement that supports fusion cooperation through ITER expired earlier this year, and there has been opposition from the leadership of the House to continuing the cooperative effort. The 11-year-old program brings together scientists and engineers from the United States, Europe, Japan, and Russia for work on science and engineering problems in fusion.

Secretary Richardson said in his state-

ment, "We have made significant advances in physics research, engineering design, and technology development. Supporting the ITER agreement is the best way for the United States and our international partners to continue to benefit from these past accomplishments and collaborations." He also said that he had conferred with Rep. Joseph McDade (R-Pa.), chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, before releasing the agreement. "We both strongly support international fusion collaboration and would like to see the U.S. and our partners complete the testing on the component prototypes," he said.

Congressional opposition resides largely in the projected multibillion-dollar price of building a fusion reactor based on a tokamak geometry. But, the advancements that have been made, and the international working relationships among scientists, are crucial capabilities to preserve for any future fusion effort.

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## Carville aims his big guns at Newt Gingrich

James Carville, the colorful manager of President Clinton's 1988 campaign, told host Tim Russert NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sept. 27, "You know, Mr. Russert, I declared war on Ken Starr, and today let me say, I'm opening a new front. Corporal 'Cue Ball' Carville will be rolling into battle against Newt Gingrich, because Newt Gingrich—this entire thing has been under the orchestration, supervision, and direction of Newt Gingrich and Ken Starr. Newt Gingrich, talking about a liar, he is a sanctioned, certified, adjudicated, and confessed liar. He's also a sanctioned, adjudicated, and confessed tax cheat. And you know what's amazing is that all of Mr. Gingrich's testimony is sealed. Now, they couldn't do that to the President. . . . In my war on Newt Gingrich, I'm going to tell the public that."

Carville expanded: "The most crowded place in Washington is Newt Gingrich's hip pocket, because it's got every member of the Republican Caucus in it. They are scared to death. . . . He came out and unilaterally said,

'I am the person that decides that there's not going to be any deal.' Well, I've got news, Newt Gingrich, I'm meeting with people all over Washington this week, and we're going to mount an attack to tell the truth about what's behind this."

He continued, "I'm going to defend the President, and I made that decision and I'm going to defend him hard. He is my friend, he is a dear friend of mine. He did something that was—he did a bad thing. I understand that. There's not any proportionality. You got Gingrich, you got DeLay, you've got Starr trampling on everybody's Constitutional rights. They're trying to overturn the election. . . . I'm not going to let Newt Gingrich try to rail my man out of office. . . ."

Carville, who also announced that he is writing a book in which he is "not going to back off one inch," told Russert, "I'm not going to let the Democratic Party get trampled over. I'm not going to let the President get trampled over. I'm going to stay in there and fight. . . . What has happened here and what Gingrich and Starr have done to this country—and violation of fundamental fairness takes place, like I say—is unbelievable. Now, you got 100 of the most prestigious people in the world coming over here, and you got people coming to this President's support. And you got—Nelson Mandela has more moral authority in his toenail than Newt Gingrich has in his whole body."

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## AFL-CIO mobilizes effort to save Social Security

Using an argument heretofore exclusively documented by this news service, the AFL-CIO on Sept. 22 announced a "broad grassroots educational campaign to strengthen Social Security," and to prevent it from being chiseled away by Republicans who want to spend the projected budget surplus, which only exists because of the Social Security trust fund. Regarding the GOP Congressional leadership's "90-10 Tax Relief Plan," the AFL-CIO said that "according to the Congressional Budget Office, there are no budget surpluses without Social Security over the five-year period in which Republicans want to spend \$80 billion tax cuts.

**THE U.S. CONSULATE** in Hamburg, Germany was put under tight security, in anticipation of a terrorist attack from networks associated with Osama bin Laden, AP reported on Sept. 26. The alert came after German authorities arrested Mamdouh Mahmoud Salim, a Sudanese associate of bin Laden wanted by the United States for terrorist plotting.

**VIRGINIA'S** Coffeewood prison is set to explode because of overcrowding, according to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* on Sept. 27. "Coffeewood is like packing a box marked 'firecrackers only' with dynamite/TNT," said one correctional officer. The prison has twice the number of inmates it was designed for, and one-third of them are classified as maximum security. But the state has leased 3,290 of its new maximum security cells to other states.

**JIMMY CARTER** called for an investigation into whether the Al-Shifa plant in Sudan that was bombed by the United States, was producing chemical weapons materials. "If the evidence shows that the Sudanese are guilty, they should be condemned. . . . Otherwise, we should admit our error and make amends to those who have suffered loss or injury," Carter said.

**ABUSIVE PROSECUTORS** need to be reined in with something like the McDade-Murtha bill, wrote Paul Craig Roberts in the *Washington Times* on Sept. 24. "Mr. Clinton's obstinacy in the face of law has unleashed prosecutors who were already off the reservation," and they will not stop unless they face indictment for their abusive practices.

**THE RACIALLY** motivated Federal re-trial of a former Houston City Councilman and former Ports Commissioner, both Hispanics, opened on Sept. 16. The first one ended in mistrial when the defense learned that the FBI stingman was a convicted thief, a drug dealer, and had been fired from the Drug Enforcement Administration.

'Clearly, without Social Security, there is no surplus to finance Republican tax giveaways,' said ALF-CIO President John J. Sweeney. 'It's a totally irresponsible proposal designed to appeal to America's voters during an election year — it spends a surplus that does not exist and it undermines Social Security. . . .

" 'Social Security is critical to America's working families, and is the one leg of the retirement income stool that actually works for the majority of working men and women. The other two legs — pensions and savings — are already shaky.' "

The labor federation launched an ad campaign in 20 congressional districts, asking members of Congress to vote against the GOP's plan.

## Texans' right to sue HMOs upheld by court

The nation's first state law that makes health maintenance organizations (HMOs) liable for negligent treatment decisions was upheld by U.S. Judge Vanessa D. Gilmore in Texas on Sept. 18. Judge Gilmore's 64-page decision sought to resolve the thorny issue of how or whether the Texas law infringes on HMOs that claim protection from state regulations under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. ERISA was enacted in 1974 to assure uniform protection nationwide of employer-provided benefit plans, by preempting state laws relating to employee plans. ERISA-protected health maintenance organizations cover about 60% of the 11 million Texans who are enrolled in HMOs.

The Texas law imposes a duty on HMOs to provide a standard of care when making medical decisions, and holds them liable for damages caused by a failure to exercise that duty. The law also permits patients to appeal their HMO's decision to deny care in an Independent Review process administered by the Texas Department of Insurance. Judge Gilmore's decision upheld the right to sue HMOs, arguing that it defines a standard of care for medical treatment and addresses the quality of care an HMO provides (a perspective upheld by other Federal decisions); the law, she ruled, does not place new regula-

tions on employer plans, and therefore does not violate the Federal ERISA statute. The state's largest HMO, Aetna, is expected to appeal the ruling.

She also threw out the law's Independent Review provision because, she wrote, it places new state mandates and "burdens" on the HMOs that are what Congress sought to prevent with ERISA. HMOs had hoped to retain the Independent Review provision as an alternative to liability suits, as did the state, which enacted it. The Texas Attorney General and Aetna have already agreed to petition the court to stay this aspect of the decision to allow patient appeals to continue.

## Moderate GOPers hope to weaken Elmer Gantrys

Moderate Republican spokesmen are appealing to the Constitution and due process in order to undercut the Armageddonists and Elmer Gantrys who make up much of Kenneth Starr's political lynch mob (in league with the "New Democrats," who are stabbing their President in the back). Most visible among these moderates has been Rep. Lindsay Graham (S.C.), who appeared on NBC's "Meet The Press" on Sept. 20. He specified that since all the material that Starr released to Congress amounts to grand jury hearings, not actual evidence, unless there is cross-examination and a fair hearing, no impeachment process should move forward.

Former Republican Presidential candidate Robert Dole was called by President Clinton on Sept. 18 and asked for his advice on the Starr witch-hunt. Dole, who serves on the Presidentially appointed International Commission for Missing Persons in the Balkans, told Clinton that he was proud to serve the President, and that the United States must be unified in the face of Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic's genocidal actions. Dole has called for immediate action against Serbian aggression in Kosova.

Sources have told *EIR* that moderate Republicans see this situation as an opportunity to reduce the power of the Christian Right/Temple Mount Armageddonists. They add that Starr's key witness, Linda Tripp, might be investigated for her criminal activity.