

National News

Justice Dept. sought to stall Contra probe

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Feldman has charged that Lawrence H. Scharf, a senior aide to the U.S. Attorney for Miami, Florida, altered a memo written by Feldman in a manner that strengthened the argument for holding off a grand jury investigation into charges of possible illegal gun-running to the Contras, six months before the Iran-Contra scandal was exposed. The charge was quoted by the *Miami Herald* on Nov. 16.

The changes, which Feldman says were made without his knowledge, included an addition which read, "Absent further field investigation, a grand jury investigation at this point would represent a fishing expedition with little prospect that it would bear fruit." The revised memo was then sent to the Justice Department in Washington, D.C.

Scharf says that he did not know Feldman had not been shown the revisions, and claims, "I've been in the Justice Department for 10 years. I made certain calls in my judgment that were based on what I thought was a sound investigation and prosecution strategy."

Justice lawyers don't want dope tests

A Department of Justice memo, dated Oct. 28, mandating all employees in one of the department's divisions to report for a briefing by Deputy Attorney General Arnold Burns on the federal employees program, was canceled "until further notice" the following day, the *Washington Post* reported Nov. 13. The *Post* noted that the Department of Justice "is bracing to be sued by its own lawyers, who claim the proposed random testing is unconstitutional."

The ACLU's director of local chapters, Arthur B. Spitzer, hosted a meeting of more than 100 Justice Department lawyers. Former Maryland Attorney General Stephen Sachs, who has agreed to represent the law-

yers free of charge, briefed the group on his views about the constitutionality of drug testing and the prospect of a legal challenge.

LaRouche files for matching funds

Lyndon H. LaRouche's 1988 presidential campaign committee, the LaRouche Democratic Campaign, made its application for matching funds Nov. 18. Contributions of 1,693 supporters from 23 states, for a submission total of \$291,298.11, are the centerpiece of the application filed with the Federal Election Commission. The legal requirement for obtaining matching funds is \$5,000 from 20 different states; no more than \$250 from any one individual may be submitted for matching.

Campaign Treasurer Edward Spannaus characterized the submission as "a reflection of the growing support and strength of the campaign in this hour of national crisis. This submission shows not only 'broad public support' by the number of states, but also in the varied sectors of the population supporting Mr. LaRouche's campaign. Farmers, skilled workers, entrepreneurs, and retirees, are among those Americans giving their support to Lyndon LaRouche.

"This broad base of support stems from the fact that LaRouche is the only candidate, in either party, who even recognizes the crises of economic collapse, AIDS, and national security, and offers rational solutions to them. The campaign's matching-funds submission is a stinging rebuff by the American population to those corrupt forces in government who have tried for more than a year to stop this presidential campaign and to shut down the political movement behind it."

Democratic hopefuls demand more austerity

Five Democratic presidential candidates all called for "reforms" to lower the cost—and

quality—of health care for the elderly, at a Des Moines, Iowa forum on Nov. 19, sponsored by the American Association of Retired Persons. Richard Gephardt, Paul Simon, Jesse Jackson, Michael Dukakis, and Bruce Babbitt attended.

While none of the candidates present dared call for cutting Social Security directly, Dukakis touted the example of a "health maintenance organization" (HMO) in Massachusetts which has lowered the hospital admittance rate of its clients by 60%, and Gephardt praised HMOs which focus on diet and exercise, rather than "expensive" treatment of illness. Simon said that "preventive care" is the priority, noting that catching breast cancer early can save thousands of dollars. Babbitt advocated "home care" over "impersonal institutions," which, he said, are "less humane and more expensive." Jackson called for paying for health care by making the Japanese, Europeans, the wealthy, and corporations "pay their fair share," and added the SDI should be killed and 100,000 troops taken out of Europe.

Lyndon LaRouche, who opposes such austerity measures and advocates a high-technology approach to medical research, was not invited.

Pentagon reports Soviet space buildup

The Soviet Union has spent almost \$80 billion on military space programs during the past decade, and is dramatically expanding its ability to boost payloads into space, in pursuit of a "war-fighting capability in space," according to a new Pentagon study, *The Soviet Space Challenge*.

Prepared by the Defense Intelligence Agency at the request of then-Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, the study says that the increase in Soviet space capability exceeds even the Soviets' needs for the next 15 years, and clearly suggests that they are developing space-based weapons.

Weinberger, in his introduction to the report, writes, "The Soviet program points in one direction—the methodical pursuit of a war-fighting capability in space. And be-

cause the Western democracies, particularly the U.S., have directed a large part of their space resources and technology toward other goals, and sometimes have lacked clear goals, we have allowed the Soviet Union to come dangerously close to achieving its military objectives in space."

According to Weinberger, the report "raises the possibility that the Soviets are already considering the lift requirements necessary to expand rapidly their large-scale military presence in space."

Weinberger attacks Congress's meddling

Congressional interference in foreign and defense policy is jeopardizing U.S. national security, former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger told the Center for the Study of the Presidency, at a conference in Philadelphia on Nov. 15. "What emerges is a pattern that spells disaster for American interests," he said. "Interminable debate in place of prompt action and sudden lurches in place of steady policies."

"If we fail to take timely action," Weinberger argued, "we do more than send our allies and enemies a signal of indecision. We risk blundering even more deeply into danger by losing the best opportunity for early and effective action."

"Even . . . Thomas Jefferson assumed the President's primacy in international affairs," telling George Washington in 1790, "'The transaction of business with foreign nations is executive altogether.' . . . There is no sign that in attempting to assume a greater role in foreign policy, the Congress understands itself to be embarking on a radical re-design of the separation of powers."

JDL members indicted for terrorism

A grand jury in Brooklyn, New York handed down new indictments against members of the Jewish Defense League (JDL) the first week in November. Tsvi Killstein,

Jay Cohen, and several others were indicted for bombings and grand larceny incidents spanning the past 10 years.

Killstein is known to work for an "anti-cult deprogramming team" in Brooklyn called COJAC, which informed sources say is jointly run by the JDL and the Lubovitcher Hassidic cult.

In a related development, an FBI memo from the ongoing investigation of the JDL for the assassinations of Tscherim Soobzokov and Alex Odeh in 1985, says that there are indications the assassins have escaped to Israel, according to the *Village Voice* of Nov. 18, which says it has obtained a copy of the memo.

Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) is planning to conduct a congressional investigation into the assassinations, and why this information has been covered up until now.

Dollar collapse hits U.S. military personnel

The Pentagon is facing a deficit of at least \$325 million in the fund used to pay overseas allowances to U.S. military personnel, thanks to the falling value of the dollar, the *New York Times* reported on Nov. 16.

Unless Congress authorizes Defense Department Comptroller Robert W. Helms to transfer money to that account from other sources, the Pentagon will be forced to submit a supplemental request to Congress, as it did last year, since it is required by law to pay overseas housing allowances and foreign cost-of-living adjustments to military personnel outside the United States. Because of recent declines in the dollar, said Helms, "we're looking at \$325 million in unbudgeted costs in the military personnel accounts."

The Pentagon's expenses had been pegged on 2.06 deutschemarks to the dollar, and 163.10 yen. Helms wants permission to dip into the "currency fluctuation fund" to cover the deficit caused by slippage of the dollar to 1.65 DM and 134 yen, calling it "the most attractive of a number of bad options," since the money in the fund has already been appropriated for something else.

Briefly

● **'UNDECIDED'** ranks first among Democratic Party presidential candidates. The latest Gallup poll shows that 43% of Democratic voters are "undecided." Taking the number-two slot was Jesse Jackson, with 22%. Another 8 points to the rear was Michael Dukakis. The remaining candidates drew 5-8%, with Bruce Babbitt holding up the bottom at 1%. Lyndon LaRouche was not included in the poll.

● **GEORGE BUSH** told a New Hampshire press conference that he supported "whatever compromise" federal negotiators might reach to reduce the budget deficit.

● **REPUBLICAN** slumlord Donald Trump is being wooed by Democratic Speaker of the House Jim Wright, who is trying to get him to join the party—and to host the 25th Democratic Congressional Dinner.

● **MARIO CUOMO** says that Democratic Party chairman Paul Kirk has asked him to hold open the possibility of being drafted as the party presidential nominee.

● **THE SOVIET WEEKLY** *New Times* is worried about "dangerous surprises" in the 1988 U.S. presidential elections. "Time is running short" to conclude an arms-control deal with the United States, the magazine comments, "also for the simple reason that the present U.S. administration has only a year to go, and no Cassandra today would undertake to predict what will happen after the presidential elections in November 1988."

● **PRESIDENT REAGAN** challenged the Soviet Union to "stop its charade" about its own strategic defense program, in a speech Nov. 16. "The Soviets have put billions into their program," he said. "They have more than 10,000 scientists working on military lasers alone." He stressed that the U.S. will deploy its SDI when it is ready.