

National News

Bush knew all about Iran-Contra, says paper

The Oct. 24 *New York Post* headline blared that "Bush Had To Know" about the Iran-Contra operations, based on comments by Oliver North at a press briefing Oct. 22 on the release of his new book *Under Fire* (Harper Collins).

"I bet I prepared a couple of hundred thousand pages of memoranda that went up the chain of command and laterally to the vice president's office," North said. "I don't believe anybody has said he wasn't aware of at least a good measure of what was going on regarding the Contras."

North also fingered Robert Gates, who has been nominated to become the new head of the CIA, and Donald Gregg, a former key adviser to Bush and now ambassador to South Korea, as being well informed of his operations as well. "For someone [Gates] not to have known that I was involved deeply in providing all manner of things to the Nicaraguan resistance had to be almost a conscious act of 'I don't want to know,'" North said.

North complained that he and former CIA station chief Joseph Fernandez were "treated very shabbily . . . very badly by the Reagan administration, while others such as Robert Gates were promoted."

North seemed to gloat that Congress and the Walsh investigations both fell for the "diversion" of investigating North's financial shenanigans, avoiding an examination of the policies behind the gambit.

Georgetown students react to pro-abortion group

A group of Georgetown University supporters has petitioned Cardinal James A. Hickey, archbishop of Washington, D.C., to withdraw the religious status of the oldest Catholic college in the United States. The petition was circulated by students and alumni who are annoyed by the university's February decision to grant GU Choice, a student group that supports "abortion

rights," the same status as other student organizations.

The group delivered a petition with more than 1,000 signatures and supporting statements by theologians asking Cardinal Hickey to, on behalf of the Church, remove Georgetown's Catholic designation. If Cardinal Hickey rules against the petition and the university refuses to withdraw GU Choice's status, petitioners say they will appeal to the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education or directly to Pope John Paul II.

A national day of student protest, meanwhile, sponsored by the American Collegians for Life to protest legalized abortion, was planned for Nov. 2 across the United States and parts of Canada.

Governor calls hearing on food irradiation plant

Florida Gov. Lawton Chiles has called a special hearing on plant safety for the Vindicator of Florida food irradiation plant Nov. 4. Since the plant has been inspected by state officials and meets the regulatory standards, it is expected to be judged "safe" with no further obstacles to obtaining a license to operate.

State officials had been stalling on the licensing under pressure from the noisy anti-nuclear group Food & Water and the gowling crowd in the Bush administration. Ironically, the Food & Water group is opposing the public hearings on plant safety, while Sam Whitney, chairman of the Vindicator plant, is for them. Food & Water says that it needs more time to prepare for the hearings.

Sources report that the Bush administration is stalling on producing the regulations for poultry irradiation under pressure from the "chicken lobby." The poultry industry includes big Republican funders. They are not anxious for food irradiation to get started because they think that the sale of salmonella-free chicken will focus attention—and decrease sales—of the chicken that is not salmonella free. The poultry lobby says it does not oppose food irradiation; it just wants to delay it 10 years until it can gear up for irradiation.

Hersh book confirms Pollard a Soviet spy

A just-released book by *New York Times* writer Seymour Hersh provides a detailed picture on how Israel obtained its nuclear weapons capability, according to several media accounts. The book *The Samson Option* (Random), also provides confirmation of charges that convicted spy Jonathan Jay Pollard, details previously only published by *EIR*, that Pollard's information was being passed on to Moscow as part of a back-channel between the Soviets and the Yitzhak Shamir-Ariel Sharon grouping in Israel.

According to Hersh, some of the key information that Pollard was "tasked" to steal were the details of U.S. and Israeli targeting of nuclear weapons against sites inside the Soviet Union, and the identities of U.S. on-the-ground and technical intelligence sources on Soviet military matters. According to the Hersh account, Pollard's documents were "sanitized" at the office of Yitzhak Shamir, currently the Israeli prime minister, and were personally passed on by Shamir to the Soviets' top Middle East emissary, Yevgeny Primakov. Primakov is currently the head of foreign operations for the newly reorganized Soviet KGB.

Bush puts NAFTA on slow track until election

George Bush is afraid of the growing opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and plans to avoid the issue until after the 1992 elections, according to the Oct. 25 *Journal of Commerce*. While the claim may be disinformation, there is no doubt that opposition to NAFTA is getting stronger.

The paper reports the administration claims that the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks are going well, and it doesn't have spare manpower to devote to NAFTA. "This weekend's North American free-trade talks are overshadowed by the revival of global trade negotiations and the growing prospect that the 1992 U.S.

elections will delay any North American arrangement," the paper said.

The article includes mention that, of concern to the White House, is the Pennsylvania special election for the U.S. Senate Nov. 5, where Democrat Harris Wofford is campaigning against Richard Thornburgh for the seat vacated by the late Sen. John Heinz. Wofford has reduced Thornburgh's lead from 44% to 12% by campaigning on the economy and against NAFTA. Some polls report, as we go to press, that Wofford is leading by 4%, making the race a dead-heat.

Five Democratic congressmen, led by Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) who has been politically put on the hot seat by constituents for his capitulation to NAFTA, called for new commitments from the Bush administration in the NAFTA negotiations. They sent a 14-page letter to U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills asking for concrete promises in seven areas. The letter included demands for details by Dec. 15 on how assistance for displaced workers would be paid. It repeats the Gephardt pledge to hold up a vote on NAFTA if worker adjustment is judged inadequate. It was co-signed by Reps. Sander Levin (D-Mich.), Jim Moody (D-Wisc.), Don Pease (D-Ohio), and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.).

Public execution initiative gets okay

California Secretary of State March Fong Eu authorized a Burbank attorney on Oct. 15 to begin gathering signatures for a ballot initiative that would require public executions as a deterrent to capital crimes, the Oct. 17 *New York Daily News* reported.

"The initiatives proposed by Thomas M. Hall, head of a group called Californians for Constructive Capital Punishment, would require that executions be held on Saturdays in the city or town where the crime was committed. Media coverage and spectators would be allowed, and refreshments and souvenirs could be sold," the paper reported.

"Bodies of executed prisoners would remain on display in a public place until 2 a.m. the day after the executions, the pro-

posal says. The victim's family would choose the method of execution—by shooting, hanging, electrocution or beheading—and citizens could bid for the rights to kill the prisoner."

Hall has until March 13 to collect the required signatures to place the measure on the June 1992 ballot. One of his proposals is a constitutional amendment that needs 615,958 signatures, while the other is a statute that requires 384,974 signatures.

"The proposed constitutional amendment would put into the California Constitution the declaration that 'the death penalty serves the purpose of deterring crime and exacting society's just and righteous retribution and vengeance upon perpetrators of crimes.'"

Bert Lance links BCCI to October Surprise

In testimony at Senate hearings Oct. 23, former Carter administration official Bert Lance became the first source other than *EIR* to link the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) to the October Surprise allegations that the Reagan-Bush campaign conspired to delay the release of American hostages from Teheran until after their victory in the 1980 elections.

According to the London *Financial Times*, Lance described BCCI as "the bank of the CIA." He testified that he had concluded that the CIA had "coopted" BCCI head Aga Hasan Abedi and began using the bank for its own operations around 1984. He said he based this conclusion both on a series of conversations he had held with Abedi, as well as contacts with intelligence agents.

Lance also said he was visited by U.S. and British intelligence agents in 1981-82, and said "he had the impression the intelligence agents wanted to know about the so-called 'October Surprise' affair." Lance also said he was contacted "persistently" by Bruce Rappaport, a Swiss businessman linked to U.S. and Israeli intelligence and involved in the Iran-Contra affair.

The October Surprise aspect of the Lance testimony was blacked out of the domestic U.S. press.

Briefly

● **THE BAN** against asbestos imposed by the Environmental Protection Agency in 1989 was lifted by an appeals court in New Orleans on Oct. 21. The court said that it did so for reason of insufficient evidence that the chemical causes cancer and other problems.

● **LOUISIANA** will celebrate Nov. 10 as "Friedrich Schiller Day," the 232nd anniversary of his birth, by proclamation of Gov. Buddy Roemer Oct. 23. The proclamation notes that Schiller is "universally known as the poet of freedom" whose spirit was present in the freedom movements that swept the world from Tiananmen Square and Leipzig to Prague and St. Petersburg.

● **DEREK HUMPHRY**, the founder of the Hemlock Society, has stated that the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 decision *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion, opened the door for his pro-suicide views in the United States, according to Nat Hentoff in a commentary in the Oct. 25 *Washington Post*.

● **GEORGE BUSH** said that the confirmation process for his nominees should be limited to six weeks. Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) responded by saying that the push to limit the process suggests that the White House "wants to tamper with the Constitution. . . . I don't think they have read either the Constitution or any book in history."

● **OPERATION RESCUE** activist Rev. Patrick Mahoney, a Presbyterian minister and director for the Christian Defense Coalition, announced his candidacy for U.S. President on the Democratic ticket in October. Mahoney said he has been an advocate for the oppressed for 14 years.

● **U.S. SENATORS** will have restricted access to FBI reports, President Bush announced Oct. 25. Senators will only be allowed to view FBI reports in the presence of FBI agents, and no FBI reports will be left on Capitol Hill.