

National News

Bishops call for 'reasoned abortion policy debate'

The National Council of Catholic Bishops ran a full-page ad in the Sunday *New York Times* on Jan. 22, saying that "abortion policy must be debated. Without violence. But with truth." Headlined "Truth Doesn't Kill. Abortion Does," the ad features statements by pro-abortion organizations and individuals admitting that abortion really is the killing of a baby. "Abortion kills the life of a baby after it has begun," reads a passage taken from a 1963 pamphlet put out by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. "Even if you're pro-choice, no one likes to see a dead fetus," Vilma Valdez, education director of Planned Parenthood of Greater Miami, is quoted as saying.

The ad concludes: "Pro-life advocates call abortion killing. So do abortion advocates. Agreement on basic fact is the first step in reasoned dialogue."

The advertisement seems to undermine attempts to justify terrorist acts by those who portray those involved in abortion as hardened murderers. In its appeal to a reasoned consideration, it is implied that supporters of abortion may be wrong, but they are not necessarily without moral principles.

Are Washington budget cuts killing students?

Washington, D.C. At-Large School Board member Valencia Mohammed detailed the murderous effects of budget cuts on students in the nation's capital for a Schiller Institute forum commemorating Martin Luther King on Jan. 16. She told the audience that, after the school superintendent had begun a "roll call" of teachers and other employees who had retired or passed away, she had initiated a similar "roll call" for students who had died. To her own amazement, she found that, of several deceased African-American male students each month, only one had died of illness. In September there were four deaths, five in October, and seven in November.

Mohammed gave the harsh details of what cuts in the D.C. budget have done: While 35% of D.C. employees work in the school system, only 12% of the city budget goes for education. Cuts have further meant that there is no electronic surveillance equipment available to stop weapons from being brought into the schools; increases in the student-teacher ratio; out-sourcing services to private, for-profit companies; and a 10-day unpaid furlough planned for 1995. Moreover, she said, \$259 million is needed for repairs on school buildings over the next three years.

Commission unveils plans to privatize New Jersey

A commission set up by New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman (R) to make recommendations on privatizing state services issued its findings on Jan. 19. According to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the commission recommendations included that Newark Airport be run by a private entrepreneur rather than the Port Authority, Bayside State Prison and Mid-State Correctional Facility be operated by private companies, and state highways be designed by outside engineers. The commission claimed the moves would save \$200 million a year.

Also included were recommendations that motor vehicle inspections and state sewage treatment be turned over to private companies or groups of state employees which would bid to get the work. The commission was criticized by the New Jersey Public Employees Union for only holding one hearing.

Parole abolition may go nationwide

Congressional hearings on Jan. 19 on the crime plank of the "Contract with America" featured Virginia Attorney General James Gilmore on the state's Proposal X abolition of parole. Gilmore claimed to have co-authored the proposal with Gov. George Allen, whom he hopes to succeed in 1998.

Gilmore touted the no-parole plan as a model for thwarting "career predators," according to the Jan. 20 *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. The House bill, known as the "Taking Back Our Streets Act of 1995," would re-write last year's crime bill to make it even more draconian, by shifting what funds were approved for rehabilitation into pure and simple "retribution," as the *Times-Dispatch* put it. The bill offers grants to states to build, enlarge, or increase prisons for violent criminals. States that enact a Virginia-style curtailment of early parole would get extra money.

However, because of Virginia's no-parole law, Allen's spokesman has admitted that the state will not be able to comply with its own law against jail overcrowding until 1998. Sheriff John Jones, head of the Virginia Sheriffs Association, told the daily that 11 of the association's members either have filed or will soon file suit against the state, which is warehousing its inmates in county jails and creating dangerous overcrowding in those facilities.

Latest Sagan book attacks von Braun

Quack scientist Carl Sagan's latest book, *Pale Blue Dot*, has two gratuitous attacks on German-American rocket pioneer Wernher von Braun. In one, Sagan describes von Braun as a "Nazi engineer" in the course of discussing projects unrelated to the wartime V-2. In the second, Sagan describes von Braun as having managed the V-2, which was a missile built for "terror and mass destruction," implying that that was von Braun's intention.

Sagan's attack on von Braun was actually aimed at the American manned space program, typified by the Apollo Moon-landing effort, in which von Braun's contributions played a critical role. In an interview with *Space News* published on Jan. 9, Sagan remarked that one of the most important ideas in his new book is that "humans have been plagued throughout our history by the conceit that through no special merit of our own, we bear some privileged position or status in the universe." Asked why he is promoting manned space exploration now, when he has

been against it for decades, he replied that, because "our environment is so fragile . . . [the] greatest number of species that have ever existed are extinct, [and therefore] it is important for us to be on many worlds."

NASDC 'scales up' its overhaul of U.S. schools

The New American Schools Development Corp., a private company set up under the aegis of George Bush's cronies to spearhead the transformation of the U.S. public school system through "outcome-based education," said recently that it will be moving into its "Phase 3" by July. NASDC now funds nine "design projects" that are supposed to be models for education reform.

Chief executive officer David Kearns, formerly chairman of Xerox Corp., said that the program is on track: During Phase 2, NASDC has been testing its nine designs around the country, in a variety of schools and communities. Phase 3 will consist of a "national scale-up," where the designs will be made available to all communities and schools. The designs being tested include charter schools; "purpose learning," which supposedly relate the curriculum to "real life"; a focus on computer and communications technology; social support systems which involve unions, universities, and businesses in a partnership to create a safety net; and programs which will eliminate special education.

NASDC is operating with \$105 million in funding, including a grant from the Annenberg Foundation of \$50 million, according to *Industry Week* on Jan. 9.

Wall Streeters to bet on Super Bowl outcome

"Derivatives Go To the Super Bowl" runs the headline on the front page of the financial section of the Jan. 19 *San Francisco Chronicle*. According to the daily, the Paris-based bank Société Générale has planned to throw a "by invitation only" bash for 400 Wall Street speculators in New York City on Su-

per Bowl Sunday, Jan. 29.

The party may give a new meaning to the term "chip dips": Each of the guests will receive 1,000 trading credits, and will use these credits to trade options and futures contracts based on the score of the game. As the game progresses, it is expected that traders favoring the San Francisco 49ers will buy call options and take long positions in futures, while those favoring the San Diego Chargers will buy put options and sell futures short.

Special guests at the gala will include football stars Roger Staubach and Walter Payton. The *Chronicle* wrote: "Yes, derivatives. In the wrong hands they can be deadly—just ask the folks in Orange County—but they also can be festive and fun."

Top Tory compares Gingrich to Thatcher

Interviewed on Cable News Network on Jan. 17, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was asked about his reactions during his meetings with the new Republican congressional leadership. "Listening to the Speaker, Newt Gingrich, is a very stimulating business," Hurd gushed. "He's full of the excitement of victory and he has all kinds of ideas, ingenious ideas for reducing the power of the state. It took me back a little bit to 1979 when Margaret Thatcher won her first victory and we were bubbling with ideas of the same kind."

Hurd was also asked if he believed "that this Republican-controlled Congress will complicate Britain's relationship with the U.S.?" "I don't think so, not after listening today," answered Hurd. "I think support for NATO is clear and firm. There's criticism of the U.N., but that will just have to work itself out. We might have a disagreement about Bosnia, though that's not actual at the moment. I'm confident about this."

Hurd also warned Republican leaders not to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia. Hurd met with Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), Robert Dole (R-Kan.), and Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), and he warned them that the Bosnian "Muslims" (as the British refer to the Bosnian government) would welcome such a move to lift the embargo, as a first step toward U.S. military participation in the war.

Briefly

● **THE SUPREME COURT** let stand a jury finding on Jan. 23 that Pan Am was guilty of willful misconduct in the Dec. 20, 1988 bombing of its Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in which all 259 passengers and crew died, as well as 11 people on the ground.

● **CARL LINDNER**, the Cincinnati billionaire who figured prominently in *EIR's* best-selling exposé *Dope, Inc.*, gave \$55,000 to Newt Gingrich's GOPAC slush fund. Lindner is also a major contributor of "soft money," which does not have to be reported to the Federal Election Commission, to both the Republican and Democratic parties.

● **THE JUSTICE** Department concluded its investigation of the illegal operations of the Atlanta branch of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro with Iraq, stating that they found no "evidence that U.S. agencies or officials illegally armed Iraq." Former House Banking Committee Chairman Henry Gonzalez (D-Tex.), however, said, that the findings "do not exonerate the many high-level officials of the Bush administration who made sustained efforts to thwart the Banking Committee's investigation."

● **'OUTCOME-BASED** Education Is Now a Bittersweet Memory," was the lead headline in the *St. Paul Pioneer* on Jan. 23. The paper reported that students at Apple Valley High School are happier, after a community-wide task force voted to dump OBE last spring. One told the daily: "I think OBE is just for lazy people. I loved it when we had it, but I'm glad it is gone. The students say they are learning more now."

● **THE HUBERT HUMPHREY** Institute is working with the World Wide Fund for Nature on an \$11 million project to build "institutions for sustainable development in Central Europe," according to a report in the *St. Paul Pioneer* in Minneapolis.