

National News

Call for Puerto Ricans to help stop Gingrich

A spokesman for the Schiller Institute called on Puerto Rican legislators, as well as trade union and religious leaders, to join the institute's national bipartisan coalition to stop Newt Gingrich's "Contract on America," during a radio interview on Feb. 12. Iván Gutiérrez del Arroyo detailed for the island's WKII "Public Affairs" broadcast how the institute had organized to place an ad in the *Washington Post*, signed by hundreds of state legislators, including Puerto Rican Sen. Mercedes Otero de Ramos, labor and civil rights leaders, and Presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche.

"The Contract on America's goal is to privatize and eliminate our Republic, especially the commitment of our Constitution to secure the general welfare of all citizens—the basic rights for productive employment, public education and health services," said Gutiérrez. "Gingrich and his controllers within the Mont Pelerin Society and Hollinger Corporation, such as Kissinger and Bob Strauss, want to eliminate those with dark skin, and their genocidal programs will be subject to the Nuremberg Tribunal trials, as were the actions of some of Hitler's accomplices and executioners."

'Free market' farm bill is boon to cartels

On Feb. 7, the Senate passed a "free market" farm bill by 64-32, with 20 Democrats joining 44 Republicans. The bill is essentially the "Freedom to Farm Act," advocated by the Heritage Foundation, and sponsored in the House by Pat Roberts (R-Kans.), which calls for ending all government intervention in support of domestic farm and food sectors, in seven years.

Versions of this law were earlier approved by Congress, and vetoed by President Clinton. The new version would give out government payments directly to farmers over the seven-year period, in decreasing

amounts each year, in what is called "market transition contracts"; and then, nothing, as the "pure market" takes over. Production controls and annual acreage idling would cease.

The farm bill means the replacement of the farm laws of the past 30 years, which called for price support measures for farmers' products, nominally tied to the rise and fall of the "market," and of supplies. The new law abolishes any semblance of market-based price supports. Over the years, the "market" has increasingly become an obvious fiction: Up to 90% of the U.S. market (such as poultry production and processing) is dominated by international commodities cartel interests, connected to London finance.

Some concessions were granted to secure Democratic votes: especially, that the Agriculture Act of 1949 would go into effect at the end of 2002, if no new legislation is enacted. The 1949 law calls for continuing parity pricing for farm commodities, at 60-90% of parity, unless superseded by legislation; and providing for the security of the national food supply, and the good of the economy. Other concessions included the reauthorization of food stamps, emergency meals, and related nutrition programs.

Pennsylvania governor proposes killer budget

Republican Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge's new state budget calls for more than \$300 million in state welfare cuts, while increasing funding for prisons, and reducing the corporate income tax and the capital stock and franchise taxes, according to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Philadelphia Tribune*.

The budget would eliminate health insurance for 157,000 people. Some 133,000 people fall under the category of "Medically Needy Only," who often work in minimum wage jobs, and are too poor to afford health insurance, for planned "savings" of \$249 million. "The hope is that through their own work, they'll be able to acquire their own insurance," said the governor's press secretary. The remaining 24,000 are disabled peo-

ple who cannot work; they will lose \$205 a month in cash assistance.

Ridge also plans to refuse \$9 million in federal funds for assistance to children under 3 years old, and replace the lost money with \$6.5 million in state funds this year. This means that the state will not have to abide by federal regulations in this area.

Budget provisions listed by the *Tribune* include: cuts in medical assistance, and funding freezes for schools and mass transit; business taxes slashed by \$60 million, including a \$24 million reduction in capital stock and franchise taxes; increased funding for prisons from \$836 to \$916 million; and halving state subsidies for private colleges and freezing funding for state-owned colleges.

Anti-drug author blasts Buckley, Soros

Rachel Ehrenfeld, author of two books on drug-money laundering and narco-terrorism, penned a devastating refutation to William F. Buckley's call for drug legalization in the *Wall Street Journal* on Feb. 7. "Until the early 1990s, the voices to legalize drugs were not in sync," she began. "This picture changed when international financier George Soros donated \$6 million to the Drug Policy Foundation, \$4 million to his own Lindesmith Center, \$3 million to Drug Strategies, and smaller grants to a variety of institutions in the U.S. and abroad. His sponsorship unified the movement to legalize drugs and gave it the respectability and credibility that it lacked. Mr. Buckley's latest endorsement of legalization has added 'intellectual' weight to the movement."

Point by point, Ehrenfeld refuted the arguments of William F. Buckley's *National Review*, which pushes for drug legalization because the war on drugs is allegedly lost. Ehrenfeld cited two standard studies ("Monitoring the Future" and "The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse") to show that there has been a measurable drop in drug usage among children over 12 years of age since the peak year of 1979. She also showed that drugs are the primary cause of crime in America.

Her conclusion: "A recent national Gallup Poll revealed that 85% of Americans reject drug legalization. The public . . . realizes that being under the influence of mind-altering substances is the problem, not the drug law."

Seniors, mayor vent ire at D.C. control board

Hundreds of senior citizens jammed a meeting of the Washington, D.C. financial Control Board on Feb. 7, waving signs and booing the board to protest the threatened shutdown of D.C.'s Office on Aging and \$150 million more in cuts this year, which the Control Board is demanding. Already, because of austerity cutbacks, the garbage in the nation's capital is rarely collected, and schools are regularly closed when heating, electricity, and plumbing break down.

Mayor Marion Barry said the District needs \$500 million more in federal funds to pay vendors, and that he refuses to go along with many of the cuts being proposed. He was broadly applauded in his testimony.

On a related issue, the Control Board held a closed-door meeting earlier in the day with city labor leaders, in an attempt to win their support for large-scale privatization of city services—another austerity move—while the issue of disciplinary action against dozens of workers who demonstrated last December against privatization is still pending.

Florida flouts law in effort to fight NAFTA

Florida State Agriculture Commissioner Bob Crawford, has established a regimen of inspecting every truck entering Florida, for foreign agricultural goods, according to the *Journal of Commerce* on Feb. 9. Samples of imported cargo are taken for testing in state laboratories, and a \$70 "inspection charge" imposed on the trucker. Trucks are being turned back if they do not pay the charge, or if they are found in violation of state laws.

Crawford made it clear that his action was motivated by the fact that, since the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the subsequent December 1994 collapse of the Mexican peso, Florida's share of the U.S. winter vegetable market has plummeted from 68% to 37%. He also cited findings, presented at a recent conference in Texas, that 17-25% of Mexican produce sampled in that state was found to be contaminated with *E. coli* 057H7 bacterium.

U.S. Customs and the U.S. Agriculture Department officials are fully aware that Florida's actions are illegal, and "usurp the federal government's power to regulate foreign trade, as spelled out in the U.S. Constitution," reported the *Journal*. The administration is treating the situation gingerly, however; officials have reportedly dissuaded Crawford from widening his inspections to include state's airports and marine ports.

Governors issue plans to gut Medicaid, welfare

The National Governors Association unanimously drafted two proposals to "reform" Medicaid, Medicare, and welfare at their Feb. 6 winter policy conference in Washington. Both the White House and Congressional leaders have said that they will carefully study the documents, titled "Restructuring Medicaid," and "Welfare Reform." Congressional hearings will take place shortly after the recess.

Indications are that the governors are moving in a direction of drastically reducing the current level of federally guaranteed "entitlements" and reverting many policy and spending decisions to the states. The states would receive the greatest latitude of independence from the federal government in the case of the disabled.

The welfare reform proposal places great emphasis on job training and getting people off of welfare and into jobs within five years. Much of the welfare program—with the exception of food stamps and school lunch programs—would revert to the states with only minimal federal oversight.

Briefly

MICHAELMILKEN, the convicted junk bond king and ADL moneybags, is coming under more intense scrutiny by the Securities and Exchange Commission, since he began advising several of the media giants, including Ted Turner, who is merging his Turner Broadcasting with Time Warner; and acting as a go-between in MCI's decision to invest heavily in Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.

JACK KEVORKIAN, "Doctor Death," is set to go to trial in Michigan the week of Feb. 19, on charges that he violated the state's expired ban on assisted suicide in connection with two deaths in 1993. A three-judge panel of the Court of Appeals on Feb. 13 lifted a stay that had been imposed by the court the previous week.

LADY MARGARET Thatcher landed her broomstick at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia on Feb. 1. She participated in Charter Day ceremonies with keynote speaker Pamela Churchill Harriman, the U.S. ambassador to France and Democratic Party "fat cat," who is down to her last \$15 million after legal battles with Averell Harriman's children over his estate.

PHIL GRAMM announced he was dropping out of the Presidential race on Feb. 14, after failing to cross the double-digit threshold in the Iowa caucuses. In other campaign news, Conservative Revolution poster-boys, Virginia Gov. George Allen and Massachusetts Gov. William Weld, endorsed front-runner Bob Dole, one week before the New Hampshire primary.

OVER 10,000 Puerto Ricans and Hispanics will gather on March 29 in the nation's capital to affirm their Hispanic heritage and political power, announced Manuel Mirabal, the chairman of the National Puerto Rican Affirmation Day (NPRAD), on Feb. 8. The rally is a prelude to the Hispanic march of One Million in Washington set for next Oct. 12, Columbus Day.