

# National News

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## GOP gets out the knives against 'activist' judges

Congressional Republicans, led by Conservative Revolutionists seeking to replace the Constitution with the tyranny of popular opinion, are beginning a drive to impeach "activist" or "liberal" federal judges, according to the lead story March 12 in Sun Myung Moon's *Washington Times*.

Rep. Tom Delay (R-Tex.) claims that articles of impeachment are already being drawn up against a federal judge in Texas, who invalidated a local election on grounds of vote fraud. Another target is federal Judge Harold Baer of New York, whose decision to throw out a drug case on Fourth Amendment grounds, became a major issue among Republicans during last year's Presidential primaries.

Still another target named by Delay, is federal Judge Thelton Henderson, who last year blocked enforcement of California's Proposition 209, the ballot initiative which would have rolled back state affirmative action programs. In issuing a preliminary injunction last December, Henderson declared that it is probable that the proposition violates the Constitutional right to equal protection. Henderson said that "our system of democracy teaches that the will of the people, important as it is, does not reign absolute, but must be kept in harmony with our Constitution."

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## Clinton proposes major transportation bill

President Clinton announced on March 12 that the administration is proposing a \$175 billion surface transportation infrastructure bill, as the reauthorization of the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. "I spent a lot of time in the last few years talking about the need to build a bridge to the 21st century, and usually I'm talking in metaphorical terms that involve balancing the budget, improving education for our children, preserving the environment as we grow the economy," Clinton said. "Today

we're talking about building bridges and roads and transit systems and highways in more literal terms."

Clinton said that the bill "does the old-fashioned work of investing in America's infrastructure in a very important way, but it also ties those investments to the challenges we face today and tomorrow. I am proud that, even as we have moved toward a balanced budget and cut our deficit by 63% in the last four years, we have still increased our federal investment in transportation infrastructure." He said that the program "will create tens of thousands of jobs for our people, help move people from welfare to work, protect our air and water, and improve our highway safety."

The President noted, "The chance to reshape America's infrastructure comes along only once every six years. That means that this transportation bill literally will be our bridge into the 21st century. That's why we must work together to pass this legislation, to build on a long bipartisan position of cooperation in transportation policy to move our nation forward."

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## Kennedy blasts Brits for sabotaging Irish peace

Speaking at a rally of Irish-American leaders and political figures in New York City on March 14, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) delivered what the *New York Post* called "his harshest attack ever" on Britain's deliberate efforts to wreck the peace process in Northern Ireland. "When the cease-fire was declared in 1994, it was declared with the clear understanding that, if it held, Sinn Fein would be brought into the peace talks. But instead of convening talks within a reasonable period of time after the cease-fire was announced, the British government and the Unionists erected barrier after barrier—precondition after precondition—to Sinn Fein's participation in any talks."

The British demand for the "decommissioning" of IRA weapons was one such "phony issue," inserted after the initial agreements in order to sabotage the talks, Kennedy charged. He demanded that the IRA unilaterally restore the cease-fire, but also demanded that Sinn Fein be included in

the peace talks when they reconvene in June. Kennedy addressed his criticisms of British policy to both Prime Minister John Major and his opposition, Labor leader Tony Blair, who has publicly endorsed the Major government's Northern Ireland policy.

Standing in for President Clinton to host the March 17 St. Patrick's Day events at the White House, Vice President Al Gore announced "on behalf of President Clinton and the United States of America" that "we have the absolute conviction and certainty that should the IRA declare a cease-fire, then Sinn Fein would be invited to participate in the talks." Gore met with Irish Prime Minister John Bruton, and reassured him that former U.S. Sen. George Mitchell will definitely return to lead the peace talks when they reconvene on June 3, after the British elections, now set for May 1.

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## Lid comes off coverup of FBI's misconduct

According to a letter from "whistle-blower" FBI Agent Fredric Whitehurst's attorney, to Bureau Director Louis Freeh, some of the FBI's most controversial political and terrorism cases during the last decade were built on tainted or deliberately falsified evidence. Documentation to that effect will reportedly be made public in a report on the FBI crime lab, soon to be released, by Inspector General Michael Bromwich of the Department of Justice (DOJ).

The letter from Whitehurst's attorney asserts, "Our review of more than 10,000 pages of documents released by the FBI pursuant to court order, and other publicly available materials related to the IG report, demonstrate that the vast majority of Dr. Whitehurst's major allegations have been fully substantiated. These include, but are not limited to, the allegation about misconduct in the Judge Hastings matter, major problems in the handling of evidence in the Oklahoma City Bombing matter, [and] major problems in the FBI lab work and testimony in the World Trade Center Bombing matter. . . ."

More broadly, Whitehurst's attorneys claim that the referenced documents and the IG's report will confirm that reports were

“illegally altered,” and that “illegally altered lab documents have been used as evidence in courts of law.” In the case of former federal Judge Alcee Hastings, who is now a U.S. congressman, the fraudulent FBI Lab documentation led Congress to impeach Hastings from the bench. Those U.S. representatives and senators who relied on the falsified data, are now confronted with having to reassess the entire matter of prosecutorial misconduct by the leading agencies of federal law enforcement. Inspector General Bromwich’s review reportedly cites at least 50 cases in which defendants have been tried on the basis of tainted evidence.

After the draft of the report was given to the FBI for review, Freeh removed Whitehurst from his job as chief explosives expert at the FBI crime lab. On March 5, Freeh told the House Appropriations Committee that Whitehurst was suspended “solely . . . on the basis of the recommendations by the Inspector General and their findings with respect to . . . Whitehurst.”

Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), however, released correspondence on March 18 between Freeh and Bromwich, in which Bromwich wrote, “The draft report in fact contains no such recommendation. . . . The inaccuracies in your testimony should be corrected.” Within hours of Grassley’s releasing the letter, the FBI issued a statement claiming that Freeh “rejects any contention that he deliberately misled either the Congress or the public.” The statement concluded, “He promptly corrected the record. Freeh regrets his inadvertent omission.”

As we reported last week, on Feb. 28, Falcon B. Hawkins, the U.S. District judge for Charleston, South Carolina, issued an 86-page decision, condemning the Department of Justice for “egregious prosecutorial misconduct,” in dismissing five convictions falsely obtained in his own courtroom.

## Japan’s atomic energy plan described to ANS

Speaking to the American Nuclear Society chapter in Washington, D.C. on March 20, Dr. Yoshinori Ihara, vice-chairman of the Japanese Atomic Energy Commission, said that his country—which already generates

30% of its electricity from nuclear power reactors—is developing nuclear energy not just for itself, but for the world.

Ihara emphasized that “in developing countries such as those in Asia, economic growth and population explosion are causing a rapid increase in the demand for energy. He said that at the recent Eighth International Conference for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia, “many representatives from nine Asian and Pacific countries expressed their strong commitment to the use of nuclear energy in order to solve these problems.”

Ihara concluded by noting: “As one of the advanced countries in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, we consider it important to respond appropriately to the growing world’s energy demands, and also to make efforts to resolve common issues we face such as integrating environmental protection with the use of nuclear energy. Only if we do, so I believe, can we establish a prosperous society in the 21st century.”

## HHS makes hospices pay if patients live ‘too long’

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is demanding that hospices repay the federal government for Medicare funds spent on patients who live “too long,” according to a *Los Angeles Times* wire of March 15. A dozen hospice programs have been notified by the Inspector General’s office of HHS, that they improperly spent \$83 million caring for people who lived more than 210 days after entering a hospice.

The Inspector General’s office is demanding repayment in cases where patients lived beyond the six months permitted for hospice care, where no medical treatment is provided anyway, other than the administering of pain-killers. According to the wire, the \$83 million in alleged incorrect charges has been identified in five states, California, Illinois, Texas, Florida, and New York, under “Operation Restore Trust,” supposedly designed to combat waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare. The federal government has announced it will expand Operation Restore Trust to all 50 states.

**THE HOUSE** Agriculture Subcommittee on Risk Management and Specialty Crops will hold hearings April 15-17 on deregulating U.S. derivatives trading. Subcommittee chairman Tom Ewing (R-Ill.) told the International Futures Conference on March 14 that deregulation would not result “in a savings and loan crisis or another Barings situation. . . . I am not convinced that all of what has been said is entirely accurate.”

**THE TEXAS SENATE** passed a bill March 17 which would hold health management organizations liable for the medical treatment they approve or reject for their clients. If passed, it would become the toughest HMO liability law in the nation. HMOs have been able to fend off malpractice liability, claiming precedent which exempts the federal government from liability for those insured under the Employee Retirement Income and Security Act.

**PRESIDENT CLINTON** has decided not to establish an independent panel to reduce cost-of-living adjustments for Social Security and other federal benefits. Budget cutthroats on Capitol Hill were hoping to slash entitlements, by artificially recalculating the Consumer Price Index at a lower rate of inflation.

**NATIONAL BLACK FARMERS** Association President John Boyd, Jr., has called for a million-person march on Washington on April 23, by “everybody who eats and is concerned, not just black farmers.” He made his appeal during a March 19 subcommittee hearing of the House Agriculture Committee. The association has charged the USDA with discrimination in handling farm loan foreclosures.

**CREDIT CARD** delinquencies have hit the highest level since the American Bankers Association began tracking the figures in 1973. During the last 11 years, household credit card debt has quintupled to \$462 billion.