

# National News

## Third Infantry Stretched in Iraq

The Third Infantry Division led the drive to Baghdad during the three-week military campaign that ended April 9. Soldiers of the Third Infantry were led to expect, that once Baghdad fell, they would be replaced by other units and be redeployed back to their home base at Fort Stewart, Ga. Not only has that not happened, but it looks like they will be staying in Iraq for many more weeks, perhaps longer, leading to morale problems among the soldiers. While the Third's commander, Maj. Gen. Buford Blount III, insists that his troops are ready to take on any mission given to them, unit commanders within the Third told AP journalists at the end of May that morale is plummeting.

The situation isn't just affecting soldiers psychologically, either. Senior officers and logisticians say that the division is not ready for combat, because they have received almost no spare parts to repair damaged tanks and armored personnel carriers, since they left Kuwait on March 22. Army ground commander Lt. Gen. David McKiernan said that, because of recent attacks on U.S. troops, he would not hesitate to send the Third into combat, if needed. "He is going to get U.S. soldiers needlessly killed if he expects us to go into battle," said one senior non-commissioned officer.

## Ryan's Death-Row Commutations Affirmed

Giving powerful confirmation to Illinois Gov. George Ryan's commutation of all 167 death sentences in January, the State Legislature May 29 gave final approval to sweeping safeguards against errors in death-penalty cases. The Legislature, finding the bill necessary to restore credibility to the criminal justice system, adopted many of the changes recommended by a commission established in 2000 by Ryan, a Republican.

Following earlier passage by the House, the State Senate voted 56-3 to approve the

bill, which will make it easier for murder defendants to defend themselves, and will give courts extraordinary powers to set aside death sentences.

Aides to the new Governor, Rod R. Blagojevich (D), said he had not decided whether to sign the bill. Blagojevich has said he wants comprehensive reforms, including the audiotaping or videotaping of police questioning to protect against coercion or torture.

The new legislation would prohibit executing the mentally retarded, increase defendants' access to police evidence, let judges file dissents to jury verdicts, and give the state Supreme Court new power to set aside sentences that it considers unjust. It would also increase defendants' access to DNA tests that might exonerate them, and set up a program to study police lineups. Seventeen people on the state's death row were released after they were found to have been wrongly convicted.

## Officials Ask CBC: Put LaRouche in Debate

The LaRouche in 2004 campaign has delivered the following letter, dated May 28, to members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), asking Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche's inclusion in upcoming CBC debates. In addition, former Rep. Mervyn Dymally of California has sent his own letter to the CBC, which he formerly chaired, with the same demand.

"We have been informed that the Congressional Black Caucus has announced plans to host a series of presidential debates among the declared Democratic presidential candidates. We, the undersigned, urge you to include Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. in the upcoming CBC Institute-sponsored presidential debates.

"Mr. LaRouche was the first Democrat to announce his campaign for the 2004 election, only days after the inauguration of George W. Bush. According to the most recent Federal Election Commission report, he ranks fourth in total dollars raised (\$4 million); and he ranks first in both numbers of

contributions and numbers of contributors, reflecting the broad base of his campaign. He has also raised significantly more funds in amounts under \$200 than any other candidate, reflecting the grass roots nature of his campaign. In many states across the U.S., he ranks number one in all categories of fundraising. He deploys the largest youth movement in the country, and his campaign has distributed millions of pieces of literature to promote a Roosevelt solution to the economic crisis, and to stop the pre-emptive war policy of Rumsfeld and Cheney. . . .

"The Congressional Black Caucus has often been referred to as the conscience of the Congress. The hallmark of the CBC has been the issue of fairness and inclusion. The Caucus was born out of the struggles of the civil rights movement, where people gave their lives for freedom and the right to political expression. It would be a tragic turn of events if the CBC turned its back on the achievement of that struggle. We urge you to invite Mr. LaRouche to participate in the debates now being organized by the CBC."

The letter is from Debra Hanania Freeman, National Spokesman of LaRouche in 2004, and is signed by present and former Democratic Party and elected officials:

Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally;  
Hon. Joycelyn Elders;  
Sen. Eugene McCarthy;  
State Sen. Joseph Neal, Nevada;  
Amelia Boynton Robinson, Schiller Institute;  
JL Chestnut, Alabama;  
Rep. J.E. "Billy" McKinney, Georgia;  
Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad, Washington, D.C.;  
State Reps. Earle Banks and Erik Fleming, Mississippi;  
State Rep. Alexander Lipsey, Michigan;  
State Sen. Alma Wheeler Smith, Michigan;  
State Reps. James Thomas, Demetrius Newton, Charles Steele, and Thomas Jackson, Alabama;  
Mary Rasmussen, Wisconsin;  
State Rep. Harold James, Pennsylvania;  
State Rep. Howard Kenner, Illinois;  
State Sen. L. Louise Lucas, Virginia;  
State Sen. Maggie Wallace Glover, South Carolina;  
State Sen. Daryl Jones, Florida;  
State Sen. Henry Wilkins IV, Arkansas.