
CONFERENCE REPORT

Editors take aim at administration

by Christina Nelson Huth

On May 10 through 14, five hundred of the nation's leading newspaper editors got together at the posh Fairmont Hotel in Denver, for five days of dancing, drinking, overeating, and listening to "wild west" stories. This gathering was the 1983 conference of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), organized and dominated by the national wireservices and newspaper chains. The featured guests at the editors' fest were Hollywood personalities Warren Beatty and Robert Redford, and more than half the proceedings were devoted to exploring the spirit of the Wild West, as a spirit suitable for the American future.

The most radical spokesman for the ethic of the untamed frontier was Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm, who recently shocked the nation with an endorsement of a 19th-century incident of cannibalism involving Colorado pioneer Alfred Packer, in his book, *The Angry West*. Lamm told his audience that the American West is a "colonial territory" which has been plundered by the industrial interests of the East Coast. He shared the podium with *Washington Post* stringer Joel Garreau, whose popular book, *The Nine Nations of North America*, retails a Civil War-vintage British intelligence scheme to balkanize the American continent.

Next came panels on cowboys, Indians, the western art of impressionist Frederick Remington, and a luncheon speech on the political role of America's hispanic population by San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros.

Presidential politics

When the editors meet again next year in Washington, D.C., the 1984 presidential nominations may be decided, and the race for the White House in high gear. How did the nation's leading newspapermen deal with the issues that will shape the primary contests one which they must soon begin to report to their readers?

In this category, they were subjected to three extravaganzas: a declaration of war on the Reagan administration's Department of the Interior and Secretary James Watt by Carter-administration Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus; a rigged debate between New Right spokesman Paul Weyrich and

Chicago's Rev. Jesse Jackson, who was presented as a spokesman for the minority-based Democratic Party opposition to President Reagan; and a debate on national security during which neither side mentioned the President's defensive weapons development program.

Secretary Watt addressed the conference on the morning of May 11, and reiterated his support of nuclear energy and the "stewardship of man over nature." Watt warned against growing environmentalist influence in the United States, noting that the greatest threat to the global environment today is soil erosion, a threat which arises from the fact that more than half the world's population depends on firewood for fuel and heat, rather than advanced energy sources. Dedicating "one American strip mine or one American oil well" to supply energy to the developing sector would do more to help the environment than all the radical environmentalist movement has accomplished in past years, Watt said.

Cecil Andrus, known in the West for helping Jimmy Carter undermine water resource development, addressed his response not to Watt's remarks, but to initiating a campaign against Watt. Andrus's speech featured accusations that the current Interior Department has improperly released advance information on planned oil-lease sales, and smacked of the rumor-mongering that prepared the recent massacre of Reagan's appointees at the Environmental Protection Agency.

The spectacle

Next came the 1984 presidential race presented as a contest between the radical right and the radical left, represented respectively by obese Heritage Foundation cult-peddler Weyrich and race-demagogue Jesse Jackson.

Swallowed whole by the editors as a potential Democratic nominee for the White House, Jackson demonstrated in an interview with this writer that he is far better equipped to run interference for the Republicans in 1984 than to represent any voter on critical issues of economic, foreign, or strategic policy.

But it was the panel on the nuclear arms race and American strategic policy most clearly revealed the political and moral imbecility of the assembled editors. This panel faced off Dr. Helen Caldicott, an antinuclear evangelist who heads the environmentalist Physicians for Social Responsibility, against Ronald Lehman, a sidekick of Richard Perle, the assistant secretary of defense who has emerged in recent weeks as a leading saboteur of President Reagan's Mutually Assured Survival defense policy within the administration.

The editors sat in stupefied silence for more than an hour, buffeted between Caldicott's emotionally provocative descriptions of the effects of a thermonuclear exchange, and a string of lies from Lehman that "deterrence is the keystone of America's security and that of our allies." Despite the urging of this reporter, more than two dozen editors refused to challenge Lehman's deliberately damaging misrepresentation of administration policy.

Lamm: 'ABM support a tragic initiative'

Colorado's controversial Gov. Richard Lamm granted this brief interview to EIR press services coordinator Christina Nelson Huth on May 11, at the American Society of Newspaper Editors' annual conference in Denver.

Huth: Do you support the recent resolution introduced into the Colorado State Assembly supporting President Reagan's defensive weapons development program?

Lamm: This is a tragic initiative, tragic, and I do not support it. In fact, I thought it had been killed in committee. It will lead only to a further buildup of nuclear arms. As I understand it, there is a good deal of opposition. The Republican governors have rejected it, and so has a good part of the GOP in the Senate.

Huth: In your presentation, you lamented the move from East to West by unemployed industrial workers. Couldn't you see your way clear toward supporting the President's program based on recent computer-model studies which show that it will create millions of productive jobs in the U.S. economy?

Lamm: Don't tell me about increases in industrial production and new jobs. If everyone in the country got cancer tomorrow, there would be more industrial production of hospital beds, and more jobs—in the hospitals.

Huth: Do you think that your recently published endorsement of cannibalism has embarrassed the State of Colorado?

Lamm: Why should I answer that question?

Lehman: 'Defensive systems far down the road'

From an EIR interview with Ronald Lehman, deputy assistant secretary for nuclear policy and arms control, who addressed the American Society of Newspaper Editors on May 12:

Huth: You said in your remarks today that "deterrence is the keystone of the NATO alliance," and "the substance of the security of the United States and the collective security of our allies." You did not mention President Reagan's March 23 announcement of a new strategic doctrine which will move us from the era of deterrence to the era of Mutually Assured Survival. Your associate, Mr. Richard Perle, has made sev-

eral speeches in Europe recently, also failing to mention the President's announced national policy. Why is this?

Lehman: What you have said is not a correct statement of President Reagan's intentions. I do not think that the President intends to move the United States away from a strategic doctrine based on deterrence.

Huth: As a spokesman for the administration, don't you think that you could have effectively countered [previous speaker] Dr. Helen Caldicott's nuclear war horror stories with a simple statement that the United States is, under President Reagan's direction, marshaling its scientific and technological resources to deploy defensive weapons technologies which can destroy nuclear-armed ICBMs in space?

Lehman: This panel discussion was very short. We had little time, and many important aspects of the issues to discuss. Possibly if there had been more time, I would have discussed the role of defensive systems in America's strategic posture. In fact, I usually discuss this question. But you must remember that defensive systems, whatever role they may eventually play, are far down the road.

Huth: You do not agree with scientists who say that the U.S.A. can develop a point-defense directed energy beam system within seven years, and a complete area defense of the United States and our allies within 10 to 12 years?

Lehman: Look, there are a thousand technologies we could pursue. . . . I cannot give an assessment of an exact time frame. . . . Obviously, defensive weapons will play a major role in enhancing future stability. We now have a major interdepartmental study underway among the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the State Department, and the Defense Department on their feasibility. When this is complete, I am sure we will have more to say.

Huth: Do you think that the United States should spend as much as the Soviet Union on these technologies?

Lehman: At least, and the Soviets are spending billions of dollars a year, aren't they?

Huth: There are rumors on European intelligence circuits that your boss, Mr. Perle, is the high-level Reagan administration leak to Soviet and Israeli intelligence on U.S. high-technology development efforts.

Lehman: That is outrageous and wrong.

Jackson: 'Freeze weapons or burn people'

On May 12, the Rev. Jesse Jackson of Chicago addressed the American Society of Newspaper Editors annual convention in Denver on the topic "Representative Democracy, the Changing Lineup." He was interviewed by EIR following his speech.

Huth: There has been a good deal of discussion of your possible candidacy for the Democratic Party presidential nomination. How should a black candidate address the question of the deepening economic crisis?

Jackson: The first thing we need is corporate responsibility to the American worker. During the course of his administration, President Reagan has invested \$750 billion in taxpayers' money in various programs to stimulate jobs in the private industrial sector. But have these various programs spurred reindustrialization and created new jobs? No, they have not.

Moreover, the President's program has done nothing to address the situation in which organized labor finds itself in deadly competition with slave labor overseas. . . . This is why I am interested in the promotion of an international trade union movement.

Huth: During your presentation, you mentioned the need for black leadership's involvement in issues of international importance, and criticized the press for refusing to report on your international travels. What position do you take on the recent vote in the Senate Banking Committee to increase U.S. funding of the International Monetary Fund by \$8.5 billion a year? We see this as a use of taxpayers' money to increase the power of a supranational institution that is enforcing austerity and starvation on many nations of black Africa.

Jackson: The increase in U.S. IMF funding may not in fact result in giving more power to the IMF. In terms of U.S. relations with Africa, what I want to stress is the absolute necessity for the United States to end all aid to South Africa.

Huth: Will you comment on the recent report from the President's Commission on Education, which asserts that a "wave of mediocrity" has swept through our schools?

Jackson: I have taken leadership in this issue for more than six years, and I agree that our schools are swept with mediocrity. There are two principal reasons for this: 1) there has been a reduction of opportunities for students, particularly minority students, due to reduction of investment in education by the Reagan administration. What happened when the Russians embarrassed us with Sputnik? We countered by investing in science scholarships and education programs. This sort of effort is needed today. Secondly, we must address the issue of motivation and effort by young people. American children spend five hours a night in front of the television. . . . We must rekindle the drive to excel, which in my experience exists more in the developing sector than in the United States.

Huth: Do you think President Reagan's recently announced program to mobilize America's scientific resources behind a high-technology defensive weapons development effort will have the same encouraging effect as the post-Sputnik programs on America's students?

Jackson: It is absolutely clear that the nation must move forward on the science and technology front. We need more

mathematics education, and more high-technology training in our schools—but for everyone, not just for the white males who seem to dominate the most prestigious and high-paying jobs in industry and the sciences.

Huth: You must be encouraged by recent studies showing that the Reagan beam weapons program, concentrating on 21st century technologies such as lasers, would create millions of new jobs in the American economy every year.

Jackson: I don't know how the President's defense program would create new jobs. But I do know one thing: We must choose the human race over arms—either we freeze nuclear weapons, or we burn people. We must talk unconditionally with the adversary, although we must agree only conditionally. I believe that leadership must be prepared to do anything, and go anywhere, in order to negotiate.

(Rev. Jackson referred the following questions to his press secretary.)

Huth: There is a good deal of gossip on the political circuits around Washington to the effect that Reverend Jackson is functioning as a Republican "mole" in the Democratic Party. The option of a black independent or third party candidacy in 1984 would certainly hurt the Democrats. . . .

Press Secretary: We are not talking about a third party candidacy. We are talking about running a black candidate in the Democratic Party's presidential primaries. Reverend Jackson is not considering an independent or third-party candidacy for 1984.

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