

National News

'Conference of states' confederates to meet

Claiming to model themselves on the 1786 conference of states which set the stage for the Constitutional Convention, a conference of states designed to reshape the relationship of the federal government to the states is being planned, tentatively for October in Philadelphia, according to Nebraska Gov. Ben Nelson (D). Far from the intent of the constitutional authors, this conference is closer to a "new Confederacy," which would strip the nation of the "general welfare" clause of the Declaration of Independence.

The prospective conference accelerates Virginia Gov. George Allen's schedule, outlined in his "Self-Determination and Federalism" executive order, which had set a conference for 1996, with a planning meeting for 1995. According to the *Washington Post*, an initial planning conference would now be set for July, with a main conference a year later. Allen's order requires his Governor's Advisory Council (which includes Lady Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain) to prepare an initial assessment by Sept. 1.

Following the 1994 inauguration of Thatcher as chancellor of the College of William and Mary, the Virginia Council was kicked off at a nationwide Republican governors conference meeting in November 1994 in Williamsburg. Thatcher addressed a joint session of the Virginia legislature on anti-federal government themes.

NAACP opposes Alabama chain gang plans

The Huntsville-Madison County, Alabama branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) unanimously adopted a resolution at its Feb. 20 meeting, denouncing the return to felon chain gangs as a "provocative and reprehensible act." The resolution commits the NAACP to "utilize all legal measures available, including public demonstrations, to reverse this sadistic decision."

Gov. Fob James, who proposed the use of the chain gangs, denied that there were any racial implications, which the NAACP sharply disputed: "The black male percentage in the Alabama general population is only 13.5%, but the black male percentage in the Alabama prison population is over 60%," the resolution states. "An inordinate percentage of black males will be consigned to these 'chain gangs' and put on display as 'high risk' criminals."

The resolution notes the shocking fact that the Alabama Constitution of 1901 was written by delegates pledged "to remove the Negro forever from the political life of the State of Alabama." Under James's dictum that inmates' first impression of prison be "so unpleasant that they never come back," the state would house the chain gang crews in the harshest prison environment, with no radio, no TV, and no visitation.

Pennsylvania judge rules against privatizing school

Pennsylvania Judge Friedman granted the Wilkensburg Education Association an injunction against efforts by the local school board to hand Turner Elementary School over to a private contractor, Alternative Public Schools (APS), Inc., of Nashville, Tennessee.

The school district made plans to hire APS when the union rejected a contract which extended the work year and tied teacher raises to student achievement. APS proposed to extend the school year, extend the school day, and give pupils a "concentration in a particular field of study for a quarter of the year, and hire its own teachers. The contract with APS would have made Turner the first charter school in Pennsylvania, in accordance with Gov. Tom Ridge's (R) plans for the state to fund charter schools, which allow school districts to suspend many of the state regulations in the name of "reform" and "flexibility."

Friedman called the district's plans to privatize "illegal," saying that "the defendants may not legally bind themselves to a contract with a private corporation to operate and manage their public schools. It is the

defendant's direct and undelegable duty to do that themselves." The ruling is being seen as a strong statement that an attempt to privatize is not in accordance with the laws and regulations of the state.

State high court justice retires over death penalty

Washington State Supreme Court Justice Robert Utter decided recently to retire from the court rather than continue to work within a "system that could not be rationalized," and compared that system to Nazi Germany in an interview that appeared in the *Seattle Times* on March 29.

Utter told the daily that his decision to retire was influenced by reading *Hitler's Justice: The Courts of the Third Reich*, saying that he was troubled by the similarities he saw in his own moral struggles. "It was not that the judges were evil," he said. "But they worked within a system that could not be rationalized."

Utter denounced the idea that a judicial system, "with all of its human fallibilities," could sentence a human being to death. In 23 years on the bench, Utter never voted to uphold a death sentence, and recounted several cases in which individuals who had avoided it were rehabilitated.

Nurses march in D.C. against cuts

As many as 50,000 registered nurses marched in Washington, D.C. on March 30 to protest Medicaid and Medicare cuts, and insurance company cost-cutting pressures that have created increasingly unsafe conditions in the nation's hospital system. The nurses want Congress to protect patients by requiring health care institutions to disclose how many nurses they employ and their nurse/patient ratio. They want Congress to guarantee the public's right to know the profession and licensure of their caregivers at health care institutions. For instance, hospitals are using janitors and housekeeping

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staff to do the work of nurses.

Finally, nurses want legal protection for those who speak out against dangerous conditions in hospitals, and they are asking to be guaranteed protection under the National Labor Relations Act. In some states, when hospital staff cuts endanger patients, nurses are required by law to speak out. However, many who have done so have lost their own jobs, and can only be reinstated after appeal to the National Labor Relations Board. In one test case, the hospital argued successfully before the U.S. Supreme Court that the nurse "whistleblower" was a supervisor and not eligible for NLRB protection.

'Fax Day' mobilization to exonerate LaRouche

The Schiller Institute declared April 5 an "International Fax Day" for people internationally to transmit faxes to their congressmen, President Clinton, and the leadership of the House and Senate judiciary committees to exonerate LaRouche. The suggested message read:

"On Jan. 26, 1994, after five long years in prison, the American statesman and physical economist Lyndon H. LaRouche was freed on parole. But the fact remains that a terrible crime goes unanswered.

"There is mounting and incontrovertible evidence that the U.S. government knew at all relevant times, from 1979 to the present day, that Lyndon LaRouche and his co-defendants were innocent but that, despite this knowledge, the government proceeded to fraudulently charge, convict, and wrongfully imprison them. This proof is documented by six volumes of evidence, consisting chiefly of government documents, that is part of the public record on file with the federal appeals court in Richmond, Virginia. Since LaRouche's wrongful conviction, three separate judges, having heard evidence of this prosecutorial misconduct, have all strongly rebuked the government for their conduct in the LaRouche case. . . .

"I urge you to take any and all measures necessary to ensure the full and immediate exoneration of Lyndon LaRouche and his associates, and to investigate, redress, and

reform the injustices committed here, so that they may never occur again."

The institute has purchased ads signed by hundreds of U.S. and international elected officials in major U.S. newspapers asking President Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno to act on the LaRouche case.

Localities hemorrhaging from derivatives losses

As the first quarter of 1995 drew to a close, more and more local governments are registering hefty losses due to "investments" in financial derivatives.

- Independence Township, Michigan could lose as much as \$6 million on derivatives bought with the proceeds from sewer and road assessment payments; the derivatives, which the Michigan Treasury has declared illegal and ordered sold, have lost between 50% and 90% of their market value in 18 months. The township (population 24,000) has an annual budget of \$14 million.

- The State of Wisconsin's Investment Board lost \$130 million from derivatives investments in its pension and municipal fund, according to State Sen. Joseph Wineke. Wineke said the board plans to pay Bankers Trust \$487,000 a month for 10 years, and J.P. Morgan \$1.2 million a month for five years for a total of \$130 million to cover its losses.

- Connecticut's pension fund could lose up to \$25 million on speculative investments, including derivatives, and has already incurred losses of nearly \$20 million. The state has sold about two-thirds of the derivatives contracts, whose value was based on interest payments from pools of home mortgages and was highly sensitive to shifts in interest rates. The state also lost about half of its investment in a \$15 million bond issued by a Mexican bank. The bond has been sold.

- Collier County, Florida has an unrealized loss of up to \$10 million on mortgage-backed derivatives investments, while Escambia County faces possible derivatives-related losses of \$22 million.

- **MARY SUE TERRY**, the former Virginia Attorney General who violated every norm of constitutional and human rights in her prosecution of Lyndon LaRouche and his associates, is now teaching U.S. constitutional history at the University of Richmond and Virginia Union University. She continues to boast of her "Get LaRouche" role, most recently in remarks to the *Virginian Pilot*.

- **CLINTON'S HUMOR** was unleashed on the Conservative Revolution in remarks to the Gridiron Club on March 25: "The problem is that the Republicans are making cruel, painful cuts. I think we should call those 'circum-rescissions.'" The President continued, "Let's replace food stamps with E-mail stamps available to the poor on their computers, where they can order virtual food and download it from the Internet."

- **THE 'ECONOMIST'** of London upbraided Anglo-American darling Virginia Gov. George Allen (R) in its March 4-10 issue, citing his friends as saying that he was "a victim of his own ambition." The *Economist* continued, "Mr. Allen's sorry performance has made it likely that, come November's vote, his enemies will stay on top," in the Democrat-controlled legislature.

- **ALAN KEYES**, a former Maryland U.S. Senate candidate, became the first black to announce his candidacy for the Republican nomination on March 27. Keyes holds a PhD from Harvard (1979). He worked for the State Department policy planning staff from 1981-83; from 1983-85 he was U.S. representative to the U.N. Economic and Social Council, and assistant secretary of state for international affairs in 1985-88.

- **PHIL GRAMM** proposed turning prisons into Auschwitz-style "industrial parks," on March 26. "We're going to take out the air conditioning, take out the TV sets. We'll make our prisons industrial parks, with work six days a week, and at night they'll go to school."