
National News

President Bush Demands Nuclear Power Policing

In a speech to the National Defense University on Feb. 10, President Bush called nuclear proliferation the new terrorist threat, and proposed that a group of nations constitute themselves as the policing body to prevent the spread of uranium enrichment technology beyond the small number of nations already possessing it. The real aim of the policy is to make it impossible for developing countries to use nuclear power to develop their economies.

While purporting to target only weapons-grade uranium, the program actually would prevent nations that are not already in "the club," from gaining the enriched uranium they need in order to develop nuclear power reactors. The ability to enrich uranium would be interpreted, *à la* the theory of Bertrand Russell and H.G. Wells, to be a threat to world peace.

Bush proposed that the 40 nations which he called the Nuclear Supplier Group, refuse to sell enrichment and reprocessing equipment and technologies to any state that does not already possess full-scale, functioning enrichment and reprocessing plants. All states will have to declare their nuclear activities and facilities and allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect them, virtually any time. Nations that refuse will not be allowed to import equipment. Enforcement capabilities of the IAEA will be strengthened. Bush also called for an increase in the number of nations which are part of the Proliferation Security Initiative (now 12), and expanded enforcement, including cooperation with Interpol in police measures and seizures of shipments deemed in violation of the world police-state rules.

Ousted Prosecutor Sues Ashcroft on Terror Cases

The Federal prosecutor in Detroit who was removed for misconduct and transferred to Washington for withholding evidence from defendants in a terrorism case, is now suing Attorney General John Ashcroft and other

Department of Justice officials, accusing them of "gross mismanagement" of terrorism cases, and charging that "DOJ Washington had continuously placed 'perception' over 'reality' to the serious detriment of the war on terror."

The prosecutor, Richard Convertino, has been accused of withholding evidence which showed that the government's star witness was a liar; the judge is now considering overturning the convictions of Moroccan men in that case, which had been billed by Ashcroft as a "major victory" in the war on terrorism. Ashcroft himself was admonished by the judge in that case for speaking publicly about it, in violation of a court order.

There is a second case in Detroit which is blowing up, around the actions of Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit FBI office, Willie Hulon. Hulon is accused of having instructed one of his informants to break the law.

U.S. Trade Deficit Hits A Record \$489 Billion

In 2003, the U.S. trade deficit on goods and services soared to a record \$489.4 billion, which is 17% higher than 2002, representing the complete dysfunctionality of the economy. In December 2003, the United States imported \$132 billion of goods and services; one-tenth of the imports came from China, representing in part, a significant U.S. dependence on cheaper goods. For 2003, the U.S. trade deficit with China rose to \$124 billion; that with the European Union, rose to \$94.3 billion. Unable to produce sufficiently either producer or consumer goods, the U.S. must import both.

The increase in the deficit comes despite the cheapening of the dollar, even though "conventional" trade theory would forecast the opposite effect.

Drug Company Trial Leads to Five Suicides

The latest suicide was a 19-year-old student who hung herself while in the bathroom of the laboratory of Eli Lilly in Indianapolis

over the first weekend of February. The student, Traci Johnson, is the fifth to commit suicide while participating in a trial of an experimental anti-depressant. Traci dropped out of school to get the \$25 and free meals that Eli Lilly gave to participants each day.

Earlier this month, the Food and Drug Administration held a public hearing to report on ongoing investigations linking anti-depressants to an increase of suicides by children. The hearing, held in Bethesda, Maryland, was swamped by parents who spoke about how their children committed suicide and acts of violence after taking the anti-depressants called selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors (SSRIs). Eli Lilly is the maker of Prozac, an SSRI.

Last December, Great Britain's drug regulatory agency banned all SSRIs for children under the age of 18. However, the ban exempted the most popular SSRI, Prozac, following the lead of the FDA, which had approved the drug for children. One of the factors motivating the ban was reports of increased suicides among those taking these kinds of drugs.

Rumsfeld Proceeds With Death Squad Program

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has given the military's Special Operations Forces (SOF) new powers for kill-or-capture missions, the Feb. 19 *Washington Times* reported. The Pentagon is getting ready to use U.S. Special Forces as spies, who will be seeking "actionable intelligence" that will enable Green Beret "A Teams" to find terrorists in order to kill or capture them. "Some senior Pentagon officials" believe that the SOF do this better than the CIA, according to the article.

This report should be seen in the context of previous moves by Rumsfeld to reorganize the Special Forces so as to recreate the Vietnam-era "Phoenix Program," which assassinated many thousands of alleged communists and sympathizers in the early 1970s.

It is thought that Rumsfeld and his allies prefer using military special forces, instead of the CIA, because the Administration has to submit a "finding" to Congress for CIA deployment, whereas this does not apply to the military.