

National News

Meese refuses testimony on Contras' drug ties

Attorney General Edwin Meese has refused to give testimony on illegal drug ties between the Contras and their backers, according to press reports. Meese apparently refused a request of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, which was seeking to probe the Contras' role in drug trafficking, because it would jeopardize the ongoing Contra hearings.

The story emerged when Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) refused to allow Drug Enforcement Administration officials to take part in a private briefing to his committee. Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), wrote a letter saying that such testimony should create no problems for the Irangate hearings, contrary to Meese's concerns.

Weinberger hits isolationist spirit

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, speaking in London on June 3, cautioned against complacency and isolationist sentiments within the NATO alliance, and warned that the Western world today needs the quality of leadership which characterized the Allied war against Hitler. Weinberger was addressing the English-Speaking Union, on the 40th anniversary of the Marshall Plan.

"Complacency has taken its toll on our alliance," he said. "Today we face threats from within, and they stem paradoxically from the very democratic spirit that defines our nations.

"It would be terribly naive, and worse, given the bloodshed we have suffered in this century, to believe that free peoples can disengage themselves from the world arena.

"Unfortunately, democracies seem to lose interest very quickly in the complicated and harsh world outside of domestic affairs. . . .

"Today our alliance is challenged not

only by the inherent reluctance of democratic peoples to provide for the common interest, but also by the disregard within some circles of the moral bonds and shared values which united us in the past."

Referring to the leaders who mobilized the United States and Britain to fight the Nazis, Weinberger said, "Our continued survival will depend on whether we will be granted such leadership in the future, and whether we will recognize and follow it in time."

This was Weinberger's third trip to Europe in three weeks. He had attended the NATO Nuclear Planning Group meeting in Norway, then the NATO defense ministers' meeting in Brussels. Following his London speech, he went to France, to meet with Saudi Defense Minister Prince Sultan.

Soldier with AIDS faces court martial

A U.S. Army private faces court martial charges for having sex with others while knowingly carrying the AIDS virus, the Army disclosed on June 3. An Army spokesman said it was the first time that such a case had been brought to court, in either civilian or military proceedings.

Pfc. Adrian Morris is charged with aggravated assault, sodomy, and "conduct of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces." The victims include one female and one male soldier. If convicted of all counts, Morris would face maximum penalties of 17 years in military prison, dishonorable discharge, reduction in rank, and total forfeiture of pay and allowances.

Michael Ledeen: 'They think I am a spy'

Michael Ledeen, the professed fascist and protagonist in the Irangate affair, is under investigation for being a "Pollard number-two," Ledeen confided to an Israeli friend during a recent trip to that country. Ledeen

was in Israel to initiate a lawsuit against Amiram Nir, an adviser to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who had charged that Ledeen had pocketed money from the arms-for-hostages deal with Iran. Ledeen said that by blowing his role in the deal, Nir did "a disservice to me, and all American Jews. The CIA thinks that I am a spy."

Israeli sources further report that U.S. Attorney Joseph Di Genova, who prosecuted the Jonathan Pollard spy case, is now investigating Ledeen's role in the affair. Ledeen's likely role in deploying Pollard and other agents on behalf of the deals arranged between then-Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, is the focus of the investigation. said that

Haig and Sharon had arranged for leaks of U.S. intelligence to Israel, through such channels as the Pollard network. These channels remained open after Haig's departure from office, and after the deals were canceled due to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, leading U.S. investigators to wonder just whom Ledeen was working for.

President lobbies for constitutional convention

President Reagan has promised to send a letter to the California state legislature, backing a bill which would mandate a constitutional convention, and may personally visit his home state to lobby for it, according to Sacramento sources. The President backs the drive to pass a constitutional amendment mandating a balanced federal budget.

The bill, Assembly Joint Resolution 8, was drafted by Assemblyman Tom McClintock (R-Thousand Oaks), with help from Lew Uhler, chairman of the National Tax Limitation Committee. Hearings are scheduled for July 1. If passed, it would make California the 33rd state to call for a constitutional convention, one short of the 34 required to assemble a convention.

Parts of the old-line Reagan machine are outraged at the President's support for the effort to rewrite the Constitution. A spokesman for the Eagle Forum, an activist group run by Phyllis Schafly, said May 29, "We