

# National News

## U.S. privatizes weather forecasting

The U.S. Department of Commerce, which runs the National Weather Service, will be contracting with private firms to provide weather data to the public—for a charge. The move, billed as a step to save money, will end up costing lives.

After receiving forecast data free for over a century, farmers, small contractors, and others unable to pay for the service, will be left out in the cold.

A similar policy of the Reagan and Bush administrations wrecked the Landsat Earth remote sensing system, which has been nearly privatized out of existence. In 1983, the Reagan administration tried unsuccessfully to relieve the federal government of any responsibility for the weather satellites. The space assets will still be owned and operated by the government, but there will be a charge for some of the data and forecasts.

## Baptist convention says no combat in Mideast

Some 10,000 delegates of the 7.8 million member National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. meeting in Los Angeles, California unanimously passed a resolution Sept. 8 urging the U.S. government to keep U.S. troops out of combat in the Persian Gulf.

Rev. T. J. Jemison attacked Bush's Mideast adventure during the welcoming ceremony. "We are not fighting over any principle or ideal. Our fighting right now is over oil. We're jeopardizing our fine young men and women over oil in the Persian Gulf. . . . It's unfortunate America would become involved the way it has," Reverend Jemison said.

In a joint letter, Rev. Paul H. Sherry, president of the 1.6 million member United Church of Christ, and Rev. John O. Humbert, president of the 1.1 million member Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), also urged restraint. "We believe that restraint by the U.S. and other nations . . . is essential.

. . . The U.S. and other nations should look increasingly to the United Nations for an appropriate response" and "are concerned that the continuing buildup of an already massive military presence . . . will hamper these efforts and exacerbate tensions," they said.

The UCC's Office for Church in Society, the denomination's social-action arm, released a statement Aug. 16 that said, "Further buildup of an already massive U.S. military presence . . . should be halted" and called on the U.S. to "take seriously the long-term struggles and aspirations of Arab peoples."

The American Friends Service Committee called on Sept. 4 for an end of the U.S. buildup.

## Judge finds government misconduct in drug case

A Los Angeles federal judge dismissed the "payola" case against music promoter Joseph Isgro and two others, on grounds that federal prosecutors withheld exculpatory evidence from the defense.

Judge Ideman dismissed the charges "with prejudice," and "tongue-lashed the prosecutors for 'intentionally' withholding evidence because 'they feared [its] devastating effect' on their case," the Sept. 5 *Wall Street Journal* reported.

Isgro, who was hired by record companies to convince radio stations to play their records, had been charged with 57 counts of racketeering, failing to report to the Internal Revenue Service certain cash payments, and other charges. The case against Isgro, who was also charged with giving cocaine to radio station employees, was puffed up as the largest payola case in 30 years.

The government's key witness was Dennis DiRicco, a former IRS agent convicted of tax conspiracy and obstruction of justice in 1989. After his conviction, DiRicco agreed to cooperate with the prosecution in other cases in exchange for other drug charges being dropped. DiRicco's testimony in his own case contradicted his statement to the grand jury that indicted Isgro in no fewer than 74 instances. According to one of the defense lawyers, prosecutor Wil-

liam Lynch, dispatched by the Department of Justice from Washington to handle the case, accidentally let slip a remark in the judge's chambers indicating that he was aware of DiRicco's testimony.

## Arnold and Porter firm backs environmentalists

Arnold and Porter, the leading law firm of the Eastern Establishment, has announced it is launching a fundraising drive in collaboration with the Environmental Federation of America, to bring in hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for environmental causes.

The press release announcing the undertaking stated that the effort would attempt "to reach beyond traditional direct mail donors and foundation grants" and would be "an aggressive campaign to raise money through workplace giving programs. The initiative, a direct challenge to United Way's near monopoly on workplace giving, has already raised millions of dollars through federal employees. Now, with the participation of Tandem Computers and the law firm of Arnold and Porter, EFA is expanding its 'One Fund for the Environment' into the private sector."

## Virginia judge covers up for ADL

Roanoke, Virginia Circuit Court Judge Clifford R. Weckstein again refused in a Sept. 7 hearing to remove himself from hearing a case concerning associates of Lyndon LaRouche, despite overwhelming evidence that he is biased by his involvement with the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL).

Attorneys for Anita Gallagher, Paul Gallagher, and Laurence Hecht, who are accused of "securities fraud" and are scheduled to go on trial before Weckstein in November, demanded that Weckstein recuse himself because he engaged in *ex parte* communications with the ADL and allowed himself to be bribed by a promise of ADL support for his nomination to the Virginia Supreme Court.

## Briefly

● **DISMISSAL OF CHARGES** against former CIA agent Joseph Fernandez in the Iran-Contra scandal was upheld by a federal court in Richmond, Virginia Sept. 6. The government had refused to allow documents considered crucial by the defense to be released publicly, which led to the dismissal.

● **RICHARD SECORD**, the retired Air Force general in the Iran-Contra scandal, testified in the tax evasion case against former CIA agent Thomas Clines that Clines shared in Iran-Contra arms sale profits, but that records of the weapons deals were "cooked" after the scandal became public, the Sept. 6 *Washington Times* reported.

● **SEN. MOYNIHAN (D-N.Y.)** compared the U.S. to the Roman Empire. "There's no way we'll be out [of the Gulf] in a year's time. Listen, we've been in Korea since 1950. We've been on the Rhine for almost half a century. That's the stuff of Roman legions," he told the Sept. 8 *Financial Times* of London.

● **THE WHITE HOUSE** has backed away from a total "free market" international competition for satellite launchers. The National Space Council announced Sept. 7 that satellites owned by the U.S.—NASA and the Department of Defense—will be launched only on U.S. vehicles.

● **JOSEPH SOBRAN**, a founder of the Committee to Avert a Mideast Holocaust and a senior editor of *National Review*, said those calling for use of nuclear weapons against Iraq are urging "mass murder." "They don't like to think of it that way, but that's what it is: a deliberate killing of countless innocent people," he said in the Sept. 11 *Washington Times*.

● **SHARON PRATT DIXON**, in an upset, won the Washington, D.C. Democratic mayoral primary on Sept. 11, taking an overwhelming majority of the white vote.

As was revealed during the court hearings in the case of LaRouche associate Richard Welsh in May, the ADL, which has expressed enmity against LaRouche and his political movement for years, has had an interest in prosecutions of LaRouche associates in several state and federal courts.

Don Randolph, a California attorney representing Paul Gallagher, argued that Weckstein's involvement with the ADL was outrageous and outside the bounds of legality and the canons of judicial ethics. Randolph said that if Weckstein refused to step down from the case, he should order an evidentiary hearing before another judge in which he, Weckstein, would be the first witness.

Randolph argued that only if Weckstein testified under oath and was cross-examined, would the defendants ever be able to know the truth about the ADL's efforts to rig their trial. Randolph said that in addition to Weckstein, he wanted Murray Janus, an ADL national commissioner and friend of Weckstein, Janus's partner John Lichtenstein, and ADL regional director Ira Gissen—all of whom corresponded with Weckstein concerning the LaRouche associates' cases—to testify.

Gerry Zerkin, attorney for Laurence Hecht, argued that the appearance of bias was overwhelming. He said that when Weckstein was contacted by the ADL, he should have immediately contacted law enforcement to investigate and prosecute the ADL for obstruction of justice. Instead, Weckstein engaged in a continued correspondence with individuals who were directly involved in the prosecution of the cases before him.

Weckstein denied an evidentiary hearing, and before denying the motion to recuse, he asked the prosecutor, Assistant Attorney General John Russell, if he was prepared to defend Weckstein's decision before the Court of Appeals. Russell said he was.

### Carpenters union hit with civil RICO suit

The U. S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York has filed a civil Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations

(RICO) suit against the New York City District Council of Carpenters, union officers, and six members of the Genovese crime family.

The suit alleges that the union and crime figures systematically extorted payoffs from contractors in exchange for agreements to maintain labor peace and to allow certain violations of the contract. The suit also alleges that the union intimidated members who challenged this state of affairs.

The Justice Department asks the court to appoint an independent trustee to run the union, which represents over 30,000 members and is the largest of New York City's building trades unions. The DoJ said it may file criminal charges.

### New call for immediate freeing of LaRouche

"The time has come for a renewed international effort of intervention for the immediate freeing of Lyndon H. LaRouche from prison," Warren Hamerman declared in a Sept. 10 statement.

"LaRouche has served more than one and a half years in prison. This is far too long, for someone who is thoroughly innocent . . . and incarcerated because of a political vendetta," Hamerman said.

Hamerman said the LaRouche case proves two things which should be known around the world: that the court system in the U. S. is corrupt, and that there is corruption in the person of President George Bush, who is sitting on evidence which would prove LaRouche's innocence.

Hamerman said that Bush is personally involved in the LaRouche case in suppressing exculpatory evidence, and that when George Bush was Vice President, Oliver North, John Poindexter, and others, tried to fabricate false evidence against LaRouche in consultation with Bush's personal attorney, C. Boyden Gray.

"The issue was that Lyndon LaRouche was highly critical of the drug-running of the Nicaraguan 'Contra' forces," he said, which Bush and others were backing. The suppression of the fact of this drug-running, was a political motive to frame up LaRouche.