

National News

Texas moves to step up executions

Texas had executions scheduled for Sept. 21, 22, and 24, until the U.S. Supreme Court granted a stay of Warren Bridge's execution, set for Sept. 21. The grounds of the stay are not yet known. On Sept. 22, James Demouchette, age 37, was killed by lethal injection. The Supreme Court refused a stay 7-2, with Justices Stevens and Blackmun dissenting.

The Sept. 24 execution of Mexican national Ricardo Guerra by lethal injection was stayed by Texas's highest court on Sept. 22. Guerra's case has become a *cause célèbre* in Mexico, and President Carlos Salinas de Gortari appealed earlier this year to Gov. Ann Richards to grant clemency. Guerra maintains he is innocent of killing a policeman in 1982.

Texas is the leader in U.S. executions. Ten death row inmates have been executed there already this year.

In Pennsylvania, Democratic Gov. Robert Casey signed a death warrant on Sept. 22 for convicted murderer Lawrence Christy, who is scheduled to be executed during the week of Nov. 16.

In Virginia, Lyndon LaRouche's vice-presidential running mate, Rev. James Bevel, has launched a campaign to oppose the death penalty to begin on Sept. 27, with a 110-mile march from Richmond to the U.S. Supreme Court, ending in a rally Oct. 7. The Supreme Court will be deciding in the *Herrera* case, whether an innocent man convicted of a capital crime can be executed.

Iran-Contra probes ends, Bush role unanswered

Iran-Contra Independent Counsel Lawrence Walsh announced Sept. 17 that he is ending his investigation of the Iran-Contra scandal without any further indictments. The investigation began nearly six years ago; officially it has cost \$32.5 million, although total costs are at least twice that. There remain three trials, including one of former Defense

Secretary Caspar Weinberger. Although George Bush should be breathing a little easier now, he can't keep his name out of the Iran-Contra news.

The *New York Times*, front page, wrote on Sept. 18: "But the Walsh investigation, like several congressional inquiries and a presidential review, did not answer the most tantalizing political question at the heart of the Iran-Contra affair: whether President Reagan and Vice President George Bush were aggressive participants, or bystanders. . . ."

The next day, the *Times*'s lead editorial said: "What did George Bush know about the Iran-Contra affair and when did he know it? . . . The answers turn out to be: a lot, and early. . . ."

"His security adviser, Donald Gregg, was supposed to be Vice President Bush's eyes and ears worldwide. He claimed to have learned of White House involvement in the Contra resupply program in August 1986 but didn't tell his boss until the rest of the world knew. Far from disciplining Mr. Gregg, when Mr. Bush became President he made him an ambassador."

A Reuters wire on the ending of Walsh's investigation, noted that the scandal "still bothers President George Bush, who dislikes questions about the role he played as then vice president. He denies he knew about the arms sales, although recent notes provided the court have both Weinberger and former Secretary of State George Shultz puzzled by Bush's claims of ignorance."

Iraqgate fall guy withdraws guilty plea

In a surprise development in the Atlanta federal case involving illegal loans to Iraq by the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL), the bank's Atlanta manager Christopher Drogoul withdrew his guilty plea and asked for a trial instead. Drogoul's move on Sept. 17 was triggered by a federal investigator's testimony that the Central Intelligence Agency operated a front company which used BNL to finance sales of equipment and machinery to Iraq. Federal prosecutors have maintained that U.S. intelligence agencies had no knowledge of the loans made to Iraq by

BNL's Atlanta branch.

Drogoul withdrew his plea during hearings at which he was supposed to be sentenced. Federal Judge Marvin Shoob is expected to decide in late September whether to reduce Drogoul's sentence or order a trial.

At the hearings, Drogoul's attorney Bobby Lee Cooke characterized the Bush administration's efforts to "suppress the truth" in the case as "the mother of all cover-ups," according to the London *Financial Times*. Cooke promised to provide evidence in court to explain how the U.S. government "from the very onset has tried to suppress the truth and mislead the court." He said that the position of the U.S. Department of Justice in the case "denies all logic and Socratic reasoning and, most importantly, is not the truth."

Cooke said he would now be introducing evidence to show that officials for the National Security Agency made regular visits to Drogoul in Atlanta, and were briefed on the BNL loans to Iraq, and that senior White House and State Department officials interfered in the BNL case by telephoning prosecutors in Atlanta.

On Sept. 16, Cooke introduced a memo from the Federal Reserve which described how then-Attorney General Richard Thornburgh personally intervened to scrub an investigation into BNL activities in Turkey, and similar memos which scrapped investigations in Rome, Italy, where BNL is based.

Investigative judge sets Demjanjuk hearing dates

Judge Thomas Wiseman, who was appointed as Special Master in August by the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals to gather evidence on possible Justice Department misconduct in its extradition case against John Demjanjuk, has scheduled four days of evidentiary hearings, which will take place in federal court in Nashville, Tenn., on Oct. 15 and 16 and Nov. 12 and 13.

Two attorneys for the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, Parker and Moscowitz, have already been subpoenaed for the October hearings, and OSI director Allan Ryan will be one of the

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witnesses called in November.

In addition to the calendar of hearings, Judge Wiseman also set a deadline of Oct. 2 for the production of documents that are not contested by either side. After the initial round of discovery and hearings, Judge Wiseman will ask both the OSI and the attorneys for Demjanjuk to submit any additional witness and document recommendations.

The OSI sought to have retired Cleveland auto worker Demjanjuk deported to Israel to stand trial as Treblinka concentration camp guard "Ivan the Terrible." When Demjanjuk appealed his death sentence in Israel, his attorneys produced evidence that both the U.S. Justice Department and Israeli prosecutors knew he was innocent, and knew what "Ivan's" real name was.

Bush taps ambassadors for Balkan states

President George Bush announced his nominees to become ambassadors to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia on Sept. 17, completing the establishment of full diplomatic relations with the former Yugoslav republics.

For Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bush named 44-year-old Victor Jackovich, a career foreign service officer who is now executive assistant to the counsellor of the U.S. Information Agency. He nominated Mara M. Leticia, 37, to the embassy in Croatia. Leticia is a founder of the Croatian American Association and a lawyer for the Leticia Corp. in Rochester, Michigan. E. Allen Wendt, 56, a career foreign service officer and formerly senior representative for strategic technology policy at the State Department, was nominated as ambassador to Slovenia.

Calif. bishops blast euthanasia proposition

The Catholic bishops of California are asking parishioners to contribute to the campaign to defeat the euthanasia legislation on the Nov. 3 ballot, Proposition 161. A letter, which is to be read at Mass, has been sent

by the California Catholic Conference to all 1,070 parishes in the state. The euthanasia initiative, the letter says, "not only contradicts traditional Catholic morality, but also attacks the principles underlying our system of government and threatens the lives of the poor and powerless in our state. . . . The issue of allowing doctors actively to take the lives of people has been pushed into the public policy arena by proponents of the initiative, and this must be addressed and debated."

The Sept. 18 *Los Angeles Times* quoted Jack Nicholls, campaign director for the pro-"mercy killing" Californians Against Human Suffering, attacking the bishops and the Catholic Church: "There would not be a campaign against Proposition 161 of any significance if the Catholic hierarchy were not leading the charge. . . . Parishioners are going to have to be badgered and intimidated and pushed around if they are going to be forced to vote against 161."

Ecologists take hit in property rights case

Nevada ranchers Wayne and Jean Hage are suing the federal government for compensation, claiming the U.S. Forest Service confiscated water and grazing rights belonging to their ranch by means of regulation.

A cast of mostly environmentalist characters sought to inject itself into the case as the government's co-defendants: Nevada Attorney General "Frankie Sue" Del Papa, the Nevada Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Natural Resources Defense Council. Del Papa, a board member for the Trust for Public Lands, hired a National Wildlife Federation attorney to represent the state, whose brief argued that cattle grazing is a public nuisance!

U.S. Claims Court Chief Judge Loren A. Smith ruled Sept. 14 against the attempted intervention by Del Papa and her powerful friends. Lawyers for the Hages say this ruling "is a setback to environmental groups who seek to remove ranchers from federal lands . . . it likely will prevent future environmentalist intervention in other property rights cases."

● **INCUMBENT** Rep. Ted Weiss won the Democratic primary in New York last month, in spite of the fact that he had died a few days earlier. His only opponent was backed by the radical counterculture New Alliance Party, forcing an embarrassed Democratic Party to campaign heavily for the deceased.

● **TED KOPPEL** was put on the spot by a member of the Nation of Islam, who intervened into Koppel's carefully scripted live broadcast, "Town Meeting on the Elections," on Sept. 16. The member spoke out against the slanders against Minister Louis Farrakhan, especially the charge that he is anti-Semitic, and announced that Farrakhan would be addressing 72,000 people in Atlanta on Oct. 18, and would suggest who to back for President.

● **OHIO** was ordered by the state court of appeals to process the petitions of independent presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche on Sept. 18, and qualified the required number of signatures on Sept. 22. In a related development, New York State informed the campaign on Sept. 11 that it was ruling its more than 35,000 signatures "null and void" because of a "filing technicality."

● **ALBERT PIKE**'s statue in Washington, D.C. was the target of a demonstration on Sept. 17, following presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche's demand that the statue of the Ku Klux Klan founder be removed. The statue of Pike, a Confederate general, is maintained by the Department of Labor.

● **THE VIRGINIA PILOT** carried an editorial on Sept. 15 headlined "Bush Should Take a Page from Alexander Hamilton," which termed the proposals in first treasury secretary's 1791 "Report on Manufactures," "common sense" and counterposes "economic growth" which "comes largely from improved productivity which is gained through technological advances" to the burgeoning of fast-food restaurants and minimum wage jobs.