

National News

White House, Vatican to coordinate relief

Pope John Paul II has agreed to the proposal made by President Clinton in December to coordinate relief efforts between U.S. and Catholic relief agencies. Clinton made the proposal in a Dec. 5 letter, saying reports from clergy and church-backed aid groups could better determine what type of food, medicine and other relief items were needed.

The pope's response was included in a letter on Jan. 9 to President Clinton from Raymond Flynn, the U.S. ambassador to the Vatican. According to Associated Press, Flynn wrote to Clinton that the pontiff "hoped there would be important opportunities to coordinate our efforts to better serve victims of disease, war and natural disasters."

The *Washington Post* added that the letter also stated that the "Holy See is deeply committed to drawing the attention of Catholics and all people of good will to the unity of the entire human family and to the urgent need for practical solidarity with our many disadvantaged brothers and sisters."

The pope suggested that U.S. officials begin working out details with Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, according to the *Washington Post* account.

FBI agents disciplined in Weaver assault

FBI Director Louis Freeh meted out disciplinary actions to FBI agents involved in a 1992 armed assault against a survivalist which resulted in the deaths of his teenage son and wife, and the wounding of his infant daughter. The Jan. 6 disciplinary action ranged from oral reprimand to suspension without pay.

An attorney for survivalist Randy Weaver, whose wife Vicki was shot by federal agents as she stood in the doorway of their Idaho cabin holding their infant daughter in her arms, called the action a "white-wash." Gene Guerrero, of the American

Civil Liberties Union Washington office, said that he, and the coalition he represents, which includes the National Rifle Association, found the disciplinary actions to be "outrageous."

Freeh found that "the FBI employees disciplined demonstrated inadequate performance, improper judgment, neglect of duty and failure to exert proper managerial oversight," but stopped short of accusing anyone of criminal or intentional misconduct. Freeh's report all but concludes the official investigation into the assault carried out by several Bush-era federal agencies.

Idaho Sen. Larry E. Craig (R) praised Freeh for his frankness in the case, but added, after meeting with the FBI director, that he was "not yet satisfied" with the investigation. According to Craig's office, Freeh told the senator that there had been "severe errors in judgment" by federal officials and that their changing the standard rules of engagement during the standoff were "terribly problematic" and "perhaps unconstitutional." The Idaho prosecutor may still press murder charges against the FBI sniper and others who carried out the assassination.

Allen's Virginia budget readies the 'guillotine'

Virginia Gov. George Allen's "conservative revolution" budget-slashing proposals were compared on Jan. 5 to the guillotining in the French Revolution's Reign of Terror, by one of Allen's erstwhile funders who has gone sour on what the cuts will do to education. In a *Washington Post* profile of Allen, developer John T. "Til" Hazel, Jr. said, "We may be in the middle of a national revolution but that doesn't mean you chop off all the heads."

Allen, head of the Republican Governors Association, who was interviewed for the piece, said that giving the needy less aid would make them more "independent." For instance, he said, while it is difficult to trim Medicaid coverage of prescription drugs, if the poor "have to pay a portion of it, they're less likely to keep getting prescriptions." Asked if he shuns the use of the word "poor" (he prefers "low-income people") out of fear of being seen as a Dickensian Scrooge-like

character, Allen replied, "I did read Dickens, and I didn't like it. I thought it was very boring."

Cato Institute endorses homosexual 'marriages'

David Boaz, executive vice president of the CATO Institute in Washington, D.C., advocated recognition of homosexual "marriages" in a commentary for the *New York Times* on Jan. 4.

The mouthpiece of the Conservative Revolution addressed the plans of New York Gov. George Pataki (R), to reverse the Cuomo administration's policy of granting health benefits to the domestic partners of all unmarried state employees. The policy, a leading issue among homosexual activists, is implemented in many other jurisdictions, and has been attacked because it implicitly recognizes homosexual liaisons as the equivalent of a marriage.

Boaz wrote that Pataki should only withhold the benefits from non-married couples—of whatever persuasion.

"Gay leaders would be better off making a pro-family case, playing up their commitment to their partners and their desire for a legal union . . . and that's the point that Governor Pataki and sensible gay activists ought to be able to agree on: Commitment should be encouraged, while relationships without commitment should not expect social recognition or financial benefits."

The CATO Institute and *Reason* magazine are heavily funded by the Koch family, which also is a backbone of the Heritage Foundation and ALEC legislative apparatus. The family has a long and unsavory association with radical libertarianism.

Supreme Court lets Texas execute innocent man

The Supreme Court, in a 6-3 decision on Jan. 2, denied a stay of execution for Jesse DeWayne Jacobs, who Texas prosecutors have conceded did not commit the murder for which he was convicted, but sought to exe-

cute nonetheless. Jacobs's sister is currently serving a 10-year prison term for the murder. Jacobs at first confessed to the murder to cover for his sister, and was an accomplice.

Dissenting Justice John Paul Stevens, joined by Ruth Bader Ginsburg, wrote: "It would be fundamentally unfair to execute a person on the basis of a factual determination that the state has formally disavowed. I find this course of events deeply troubling."

Before being killed by lethal injection on Jan. 4, Jacobs issued a statement: "This is premeditated murder by the state of Texas. I hope in my death, I'm that little bitty snowball that starts to bury the death penalty."

'Points of Light' placed in bad spotlight

A charity launched with much fanfare by President George Bush in 1990 spent more than \$22 million on salaries and glitzy promotions, while giving only about \$4 million for volunteer work, the *Los Angeles Times* reported on Jan. 9.

The foundation, the *Times* said, had received \$26.6 million in federal funds, out of its \$35.8 million budget over a four-year period. The *Times* said its examination of the foundation's financial records showed that \$22.3 million had been spent on glitzy promotions, salaries, travel, and conferences. By contrast, only 11% of the foundation's budget had been spent to provide grants for volunteer efforts.

"It's a facade," said Marva N. Collins, the founder of the Westside Preparatory School for Chicago inner-city youth and an original Point of Lights director. "I think that's all it perhaps was ever intended to be."

FBI collaborator Rowan targets NAACP, again

Syndicated columnist Carl Rowan demanded the resignation of William F. Gibson as chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, threatening that the civil rights organization will be "crushed" unless the columnist's demand is

met. The aging Rowan, who collaborated with J. Edgar Hoover in spreading lies against Martin Luther King before King's assassination, said, "Top lawyers and law-school deans who once . . . defended the NAACP *pro bono* now run from the organization because of Dr. Gibson's despotic leadership." As a result, Rowan asserted, the NAACP will not be able to defend itself from the many lawsuits being hurled against it, unless Gibson immediately resigns.

Rowan led last year's attack against NAACP Executive Director Ben Chavis. He assailed Chavis's honesty, in a campaign supposedly unrelated to the furor over Chavis's positive relationship to Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan. When Chavis resigned, Rowan immediately began the attack on Chavis's ally Gibson.

Vermont governor assails GOP welfare plans

National Governors Association chairman Gov. Howard Dean (D-Vt.) ripped into the Republicans' welfare "reform" plan as policy "to starve children and kick old people out of their houses," on Jan. 8, according to the *Washington Post*. Outlines of the plan were described on Jan. 6 after a meeting between Republican governors and Republican congressional leaders. States' rights issues have been brought to the fore, as the plan seeks giving states broad "flexibility" to manage programs with little direction from the federal government. This is proposed to take effect after the federal government would replace hundreds of federal welfare, job-training, and nutrition programs with cash grants to the states.

Dean said the negotiations among Republicans in Congress and in the states were "destructive" to the tradition of bipartisanship within the NGA. He added that the plan was the work of "extremists who have taken over Congress" and added, "I'll be damned if I'm going to let extremists take over the National Governors' Association." Dean said he planned to confer with with Democratic governors for a counterattack on the plan, and also vowed to seek alliance with moderate Republican senators and governors in order to block the proposal.

Briefly

● **MARION BARRY**, who was inaugurated as Washington, D.C. mayor on Jan. 2 amidst a whopping financial crisis, has been advised to adopt a plan to "transform health care for the poor by turning D.C. General into a small private hospital, closing half the city's shabby public clinics and encouraging other local hospitals to treat more indigent patients," according to press reports. The District has had a public hospital since 1806.

● **PETE WILSON (R)** was sworn in to his second term as California's governor on Jan. 7. He opened his inauguration speech: "We declare to Washington that California is a proud and sovereign state. . . . California will not submit its destiny to faceless federal bureaucrats or even congressional barons."

● **PRESIDENT CLINTON** met with 23 senior retired military men at the White House on Jan. 12 in order to "sound out their views on national security policy and the use of force," according to the London *Guardian*. Among those invited to the White House were Carter administration Director of Central Intelligence Adm. Stansfield Turner and former Army Chief of Staff Gen. John Wickham.

● **WHITEWATER** Special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr is expected to accept the conclusion of his predecessor Robert Fiske, that White House aide Vincent Foster committed suicide, according to Scripps-Howard news service. The news service also reported that Starr's investigators have concluded that the Whitewater scandal did not play a role in Foster's death.

● **RICHARD CHENEY**, former Bush defense secretary has announced that he is not in the running for the Republican nomination for President in 1996, according to a statement released on Jan. 4. Advisers to former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp are also saying that he has also decided not to run.