

National News

America's bridges are falling down, says AAA

One-third of the bridges in the United States are nearly in ruins, the American Automobile Association (AAA) reported Aug. 12. Many of America's 574,671 bridges are badly in need of extensive repair; thousands need emergency replacement. According to AAA data, based on statistics provided by the Federal Highway Administration, 107,435 (18.7%) of the nation's bridges are "structurally deficient"; an additional 79,124 (13.8%) are classified as "functionally obsolete." Combined, the bridges listed under these categories comprise 32.5% of the nation's total.

The Federal Highway Administration alone estimates it needs \$53 billion a year just to *maintain* current road and bridge conditions, and \$72 billion a year to make any improvements—a total of \$125 billion. Current Federal spending amounts to \$35 billion a year.

According to AAA, New York has the highest percentage of deficient bridges among the nation's states. Nearly two-thirds of its 17,308 bridges are in dangerous condition. Massachusetts follows with 58%; nearly half the bridges in West Virginia, New Jersey, Missouri, and Pennsylvania fall in the same category. In the District of Columbia, the nation's capital, the figure is 60%.

James Baker III hails Brits' King George III

In his address to the Republican National Convention Aug. 15, former Secretary of State James Baker III let the cat out of the bag imported from London. Baker's Bush-league attack on President Clinton's foreign policy included the following ravings: "So, when they write the history of Bill Clinton's foreign policy, they are going to call it 'Gullible's Travels.' . . . We have seen a representative of the IRA hosted in the White House just prior to the resumption of terror-

ist bombings in London. The result has been the worst relationship with our closest ally, Britain, since the Boston Tea Party."

Baker recited London's litany of violent disagreements with the President, over Northern Ireland, the Middle East, NATO expansion, "deferring to Moscow," etc. But Clinton's worst foreign policy failures, Baker declared, are in Asia: "Not long after Bill Clinton raised the flag of his hard-line China policy, he hauled it down in surrender. The Chinese learned that his word was meaningless. Then he elected to appease the outlaw regime in North Korea. And *all Asians* learned that he was weak."

The London *Times* of Aug. 16 featured Baker's speech in a front-page story, under the banner headline "U.S. Links with Britain 'Worst since 1773,'" focussing mainly on Baker's attacks on President Clinton's peace initiatives in Ireland. The *Times* reports that Baker's speech "delighted" Northern Ireland's pro-British Unionists, "who welcomed it as a breath of fresh air."

The Irish nationalist organization, Sinn Fein, however, denounced it as cheap propaganda. A statement released in the name of national executive member Pat McGeown declared, "In the search for lasting peace in Ireland, no U.S. President has made a more positive or constructive contribution than President Clinton." James Baker, the statement noted, while serving as secretary of state, had pursued "the failed policy of allowing the British government to dictate U.S. policy in Ireland."

CFR says United Nations is 'true' friend of U.S.

A task force of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), led by speculator George Soros, released a report Aug. 19 claiming that the United Nations "is a true instrument for furthering American Policy"—in the words of Soros himself. "At the same time," Soros continued, "the UN is in crisis, and the effectiveness of the UN as an institution, and as an instrument for furthering American policy, is greatly endangered by that crisis."

Soros, whose "free-market" schemes

looted the former Soviet Union and the East bloc following the fall of Communism, now wants the United States to give the UN a free hand in imposing genocidal policies worldwide. His CFR task force "agreed" that there must be "a change in the attitude of the United States and of the other leading members of the United Nations to the organization, not to impose on it unrealistic assignments, not to engage in a game of passing the blame for deficiencies in national policies." And, of course, there is "the urgent need to pay up the dues, because withholding dues is counterproductive as far as changing, reforming, making the United Nations more effective."

The report concludes that when the United States "knew what it wanted from the United Nations, and took the lead in getting it, the United Nations provided important assistance in advancing American interests in these situations." The British-rigged, genocidal war against Iraq, and UN orchestration of U.S. military intervention in Haiti, are cited as two examples of UN support for "American interests."

The task force included Kissinger flunkey Morton Halperin, a former National Security Council official who advocates expanding the UN's "peacekeeping" operations; and former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, the "mediator" who was Britain's most faithful ally in perpetuating Serbian butchery in the Balkans.

Top NASA scientists are rethinking Mars missions

Following its report Aug. 7 of the possibility of ancient life-forms on Mars, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) convened a meeting to discuss re-orienting future, unmanned missions to that planet. About two dozen scientists and engineers gathered at NASA headquarters Aug. 15-16, to consider how to pursue what President Clinton has said could be "one of the most stunning insights into our universe that science has ever uncovered."

According to the Aug. 19 *Washington Post*, NASA Administrator Dan Goldin's

advice to the scientists was to forget the politics, ignore the aerospace contractors, and concentrate on "what is the right thing to do" for science. He asked them to develop a set of options, ranging from "relaxed" to fast, which would include moving up the timetable for an unmanned mission to return Mars rocks to Earth, from 2005 to 2003. Landing vehicles could also be added to missions planned for 1998 and 2001, to help select a site for robotic recovery of samples from the surface of Mars.

Two NASA spacecraft, previously scheduled for flights to Mars, have already been delivered to Cape Canaveral. The Mars Global Surveyor, to be launched Nov. 6, will orbit the planet to measure its surface and atmosphere, as well as its gravitational and magnetic fields. The Pathfinder spacecraft, carrying a small rover, will lift off Dec. 2, to investigate the geology and elemental composition of Martian rocks and soil.

Health and welfare cuts mean uninsured children

The number of American children without medical coverage will escalate rapidly, from the impoverishing effects of the recently adopted federal health and welfare bills. A recent report by the U.S. General Accounting Office underscores the growing danger confronting families with children.

About 10 million American children, or 14.2%, are currently uninsured. In 1980, some 74% of American workers had their insurance plans fully paid by their employers; by 1993, that number had dropped to 21%. Employment-based coverage for children has decreased every year since 1987, dropping to its lowest level of 46.3 million in 1994. In that year alone, 1 million children joined the ranks of the uninsured, as their parents lost coverage.

Among poor people generally, health risks will also worsen with further cuts in nutritional standards—as evaluations of the new legislation at the state and local level are documenting nearly every day. According to the Aug. 17 *Houston Chronicle*, Texas's Rio Grande Valley, for example, will be devastated by the welfare "reform" bill. Nearly

one in 12 residents of Hidalgo County, in southern Texas, will lose food stamps next summer. These are *legal* immigrants, 32,793 of them, who will no longer be eligible for federal aid, and for whom there are no jobs paying the wages required to feed a family.

New Federalist exposes fascist plot in Mississippi

The Aug. 26 *New Federalist*, the weekly newspaper associated with Lyndon LaRouche, unmasked a fascist scheme to establish a private government in Jackson, Mississippi. A private corporation, Capital Center, Inc. (CCI), has been granted extraordinary powers over the city. As of Jan. 1, 1997, CCI will control all public services, and become the sole taxing authority, for an 84-square-block area in downtown Jackson, the capital of Mississippi.

From all indications, the scheme is also a privatized version of the old "urban renewal," "Negro removal" plan of the 1960s, using public funds to clear the way for depopulating the inner cities, and turning them into vast looting grounds for corporate real estate interests.

CCI's board of directors includes representatives of the city's major banks and utility companies, the white-owned *Clarion Ledger* newspaper, and persons with ties to the Sovereignty Commission and the White Citizens Council. CCI's extraordinary powers were approved by a compliant city council, including members who have personally benefitted from CCI's land grab.

CCI first had to win the approval of 70% of the property owners in the targeted district. None of the largely black renters in the district was allowed to vote. Nonetheless, CCI fell short in the first referendum, in November 1995. CCI president Franklin D. Kimbrough then announced that CCI would eliminate all those who voted against the proposal, simply by re-drawing the boundaries of the district. A second, "cleaner" election was held this year on June 28, and CCI won. CCI was then awarded \$125,000 in city funds, without further public discussion, to carry out its plans.

Briefly

LAROCHE ENEMY Richard Mellon Scaife, owner of the Pittsburgh *Tribune-Review*, is disturbed by the campaign to impeach Gov. Tom Ridge. His paper claimed Aug. 18 that LaRouche's mass-distributed pamphlet, "Impeach Governor Ridge for Nazi War Crimes Against Humanity," was a "bizarre" attack on Ridge's eliminating medical assistance for 220,000 Pennsylvanians. Though "most of the text of the pamphlet . . . provides reasonable arguments against Ridge's cuts," the paper concedes, "the rest is nutso."

DICK MORRIS has caught the eye of the gnomes of Zurich. The Aug. 17 *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, in a front-page piece on "the end of the New Deal," says that the "new Clinton was born a year ago, when Dick Morris, the super-pragmatic specialist for ideas for politicians of all camps, designed a war plan . . . to open a new chance for him." In one word, says the daily, the strategy was, "Copy."

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told Virginia union leaders Aug. 16 to "get tougher" with the state's Democratic legislators, for tolerating "the worst labor laws in the nation." Sweeney added, "Labor is passionate about re-electing Bill Clinton and Al Gore, but it is getting tired of carrying the bucket for Virginia Democrats, because every time we pick it up, the bucket is full of mud."

THE U.S. PRISON population rose to almost 1.6 million inmates in 1995, a 6.8% increase over 1994—and double the number for 1985. One million were in state prisons, 500,000 in local jails, and 100,000 under federal lock-up in 1995. State prison systems were overloaded by 14% to 25%, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons says its facilities ran at 26% beyond capacity.

CARGILL'S grain cartel has posted record profits, despite the lowest level of U.S. corn supplies in 48 years. Cargill's domination of the U.S. corn market also kept its processing plants running this summer, while shortages idled its competitors.