

# National News

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## Martin Lee backs MFN status for China

The leader of Hongkong's Democratic Party Martin Lee, after meeting U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Washington on April 14, reaffirmed his support for Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status for China. The endorsement came as the MFN debate in Congress is becoming more intense.

The economy of Hongkong, which will revert to China in July, is completely dependent upon the "free flow" of capital and goods in and out of China, Lee told the press. Lee has generally acted as a British provocateur over Hongkong's return to China after 199 years of British colonialism. Nonetheless, he correctly insisted that to cut China off from MFN, would be like saying to China and Hongkong: "If you don't stop beating your wife, I'll shoot her."

Still unwilling to give up MFN as a blackmail weapon, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, after meeting with Lee, told a TV interviewer on April 13 that he would favor something like a six-month extension only, so that Congress could monitor what happens with Hongkong. Gingrich, however, quoted Lee as having told him: "Please don't slow down the rate of economic evolution." House Majority Leader Richard Armey, also on a Sunday TV talk show, said that, although he is "an old free trader," he hasn't yet decided how he will vote on MFN. "I think the vote is going to be close," Armey said. "I think it could fail."

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## Clinton, labor announce anti-sweatshop accord

President Clinton and leaders of labor, human rights, and consumer groups announced on April 14 a voluntary accord aimed at ending sweatshop conditions around the world. Hailed as "an historic step . . . to eradicate the evils of sweatshops," by clothing workers (UNITE) President Jay Mazur, who attended the ceremony, the voluntary agreement bars the use of prison and other forced labor, prohibits the employment of children

under 15, and recognizes workers' rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Like several similar such recent initiatives launched by the President and organized labor, it is intended as a public signal that the administration would like to implement such a policy, but is being hamstrung by the Congressional conservatives.

Two days later, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney delivered the concluding speech to the Building Construction Trades conference. "Unless we get busy re-organizing on a massive scale," he said, "what will happen is, the first time a tough storm comes through, we're going to be left with little more than memories of what might have been." Sweeney said he was encouraged by the 1996 election results, but "it was nothing like what we are capable of doing." He cited the union organizing in Las Vegas and among California's strawberry pickers as exemplary of the kind of organizing and labor solidarity that can prevail against the Conservative Revolution.

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## Nurses strike Kaiser vs. 'bottom-line medicine'

Five AFL-CIO unions, representing some 30,000 employees of California's leading managed care company, Kaiser Permanente, announced their intention to back the April 16 one-day protest strike against Kaiser by 7,500 members of the California Nurses Association (CNA).

An estimated 25,000 Kaiser Permanente employees stayed away from work in response to the CNA's action against the world's largest health maintenance organization. "Not just the RNs, but nearly all other Kaiser employees, a large number of patients, and people from labor and community organizations demonstrated their alarm at the direction Kaiser is currently being propelled," said Rose Ann DeMoro, executive director of the CNA. "They want Kaiser management to abandon the rush to bottom-line medicine, stop curtailing essential services, and return to its original mission."

CNA leaders, who will soon meet to plan their next move, called upon Kaiser officials to return to the bargaining table prepared for constructive discussion of a

settlement that protects professional nursing standards and safe, quality patient care.

On April 18, CBS News reported that Kaiser's trail-blazing budget-slashing policies may cause it to lose its license in Texas. Talks took place on April 18 over Kaiser's cost-cutting practices, which have resulted in 24 wrongful death suits this year, soaring patient complaints, and malpractice charges.

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## Arizona lawmakers block medical dope proposition

On April 15, the Arizona State Senate voted 17-13 to block implementation of Proposition 200, the George Soros-funded ballot initiative that legalized the use of mind-destroying and addictive drugs for "medical use." The legislation would make "medical use" of such illegal drugs as marijuana, lysergic acid diethylamide, and cocaine contingent on Food and Drug Administration determination of their medical value.

A week earlier, the Arizona State House of Representatives passed a similar measure, by a much larger majority. Both votes reflected bipartisan support. The office of White House drug policy adviser Barry McCaffrey was very active in getting the legislation through both houses. In the Senate, five Republicans voted against the repeal bill, and this was offset by four Democrats voting in favor of the FDA requirement.

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## Fish safety supersedes hydro-power generation

The April issue of the Bonneville Power Administration's newsletter, *Circuit*, reports that, in the Northwest, "in a quiet coup two years ago, fish replaced power in the Columbia River operations hierarchy. . . . The old hierarchy on the river was flood control, hydro generation, and then anadromous fish protection. That changed under the Endangered Species Act." From April 10 to Aug. 31 each year, any action that would endanger fish, except in the case of flood control, is

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not taken. During this period, water is moved over the spillways rather than through the turbines to produce electric power, to increase the flow rate of the river to allow the fish to spawn. Had the act been in force during the 1992-94 drought, writes *Circuit*, 80-95% of all the water stored in the federal reservoirs in the Columbia system would have been needed to protect the fish.

Worse, BPA will have to run turbines this summer at all its dams, even if the power isn't needed, because the streamflow from a wet winter and spring is higher than usual, causing gas bubbles that harm the fish. Running the water through the turbines breaks the bubbles up. Meanwhile, the Washington Public Power Supply System nuclear plant will *shut down* from late March through July, because the power will be produced from the dams, which are running their turbines for the fish. Saving the fish from dastardly gas bubbles could interfere with the flexibility that electric transmission system operators need in order to direct electricity flows by controlling turbines at different dams.

### Good riddance, Ambrose, the unintelligent Brit

In his final column on April 20, departing London *Sunday Telegraph* Washington correspondent Ambrose Evans-Pritchard puffed that he is not a British intelligence agent, responding to the charges by this publication that the Hollinger Corp. journalist's deployment was to destroy the U.S. Presidency on behalf of the British Crown. (*EIR* has never gone so far as to ascribe intelligence to Pritchard.)

Pritchard, stung after having been singled out by *EIR* in fostering the scurrilous Paula Jones scandal and acting as a publicist for would-be Clinton assassin Larry Nichols, wrote, beneath the headline, "Goodbye, Good Riddance": "It was something of a compliment, I suppose, when the White House singled me out for attack in their report on the media 'food chain' assault against the Clintons. Now, apparently, the President's men are relishing the prospect of my departure after four years as Washington correspondent for the *Telegraph*. . . . That's

another British invasion we're glad is over,' the White House told *George* magazine. 'The guy was nothing but a pain in the ass.' . . .

"Let me state for the record that I was not sent to Washington as part of a British government plot to destabilize the Clinton administration in revenge for U.S. meddling in Ulster. Or at least, I don't think I was. Contrary to assertions made in a Congressional hearing, I have never worked for British military intelligence, or MI5, or MI6, or for that matter MI7.5—the fabled Welsh branch!"

The citation to a Congressional hearing is an apparent reference to testimony given by LaRouche associate Webster Tarpley in early 1994.

### Five congressmen query Weather Service cuts

As the severe weather season began, five members of Congress requested the General Accounting Office to look into possible threats to public safety caused by cutbacks at National Weather Service (NWS) facilities. The five, all from states that suffer from frequent hurricanes and/or tornadoes, are Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-Tex.), Sen. Connie Mack (R-Fla.), Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.), and Rep. E. Clay Shaw, Jr. (R-Fla.).

The "Contract on America"-inspired budget recently mandated that the NWS cut up to 200 jobs in order to reduce its FY 1997 budget to \$321.8 million, cutting \$27.5 million, or 8%, from its FY 1996 level. The cuts would entirely eliminate the Weather Service's Southern regional office in Fort Worth, Texas, one of four regional offices, and slash 23 positions from other regional offices.

There is an ongoing fight against cuts in this key piece of national infrastructure, which have already resulted in preventable disasters. On Jan. 18-19, a frost caused \$300 million worth of crop damage in Florida, because the state agricultural weather forecasting service, which routinely issued frost and freeze warnings to farmers, had been shut down by a \$3 million cut in the National Weather Service's budget.

**RACIST** Pat Buchanan embraced the British China-bashing orgy in a *New York Post* commentary on April 19, ranting that, when Crown toady the Dalai Lama arrives in the United States, America should "put her moral authority behind his just cause." Buchanan urges House Speaker Newt Gingrich to offer the Dalai Lama the House podium for a joint session of Congress.

**BARRY MCCAFFREY**, the White House drug policy adviser, reiterated the administration's commitment to cooperating with Mexico on stopping the drug plague, while upholding our neighbor's sovereignty, at an April 17 press conference in Mexico City. McCaffrey quoted Benito Juárez's motto that "respect for the rights of others, is peace."

**RICHARD CULLEN**, the former Bush U.S. Attorney in Virginia, who went on to spearhead Virginia's no-parole policy, has been named the Commonwealth's Attorney General. He will replace James Gilmore in June—a kindred Conservative Revolution spirit of Cullen and Virginia Gov. George Allen—who is launching his gubernatorial bid.

**FORMER DEATH ROW** inmate, Ricardo Aldape Guerra, a Mexican immigrant, received a hero's welcome on April 17, when he returned to Mexico, after spending a harrowing 15 years on Texas's death row for a crime he did not commit. He reportedly advised Mexicans not to go the United States and to "beware the underside of the land of opportunity."

**DWAYNE ANDREAS**, 79, announced that he was retiring as CEO of the food cartel company Archer Daniels Midland. Last fall, his son Michael, who had been expected to head the firm, resigned, during the deal arranged with federal authorities for ADM to pay \$100 million in fines for price- and supply-rigging of corn-derived lysine. The company is under investigation by U.S. and overseas governments, for similar conduct involving other products.