

# National News

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## NASA to take up Allais' experiment

NASA released a notification in *Space Science News* on Aug. 5, that two NASA researchers, David Noever and Ron Koczor of the Marshall Space Flight Center, have been tasked to check "some hard-to-believe measurements reported 50 years ago by Nobel Laureate Maurice Allais," concerning gravity and anomalous results with the Foucault Pendulum.

"The bottom line," said Noever, "is this: It's unlikely, but Allais could have stumbled onto something important. So, rather than debate a set of 50-year-old measurements, we're going to roll up our sleeves and try to detect Allais' signal directly."

The team plans to observe the Aug. 11 solar eclipse with a high precision gravimeter. "If Allais' disturbance is real, and if it has something to do with gravity, then we will be able to measure it to 10 significant digits," says Noever.

*21st Century Science & Technology* magazine published Allais' paper "Should the Laws of Gravitation Be Reconsidered?" in its Fall 1998 issue.

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## Poverty increases due to welfare 'reform'

The same day that President Clinton addressed a Chicago conference of the Welfare to Work Partnership on Aug. 2, the Washington-based Urban Institute released the first national survey of those who have left welfare. The study, "Families Who Left Welfare: Who Are They and How Are They Doing?," looks at recipients who left between 1995-97; the welfare reform law passed in 1996, but cuts began to be implemented as early as 1994, with the Conservative Revolution's takeover in Congress.

The 50-page Urban Institute study found that, of the 35% of welfare recipients now working, most work in service jobs in the low-wage labor market, averaging \$6.61/hour. Welfare leavers who are single mothers have jobs similar to those of other low-income mothers, but the latter are more

likely to have employer-sponsored health insurance; two-thirds of welfare leavers do not have insurance from their employer. More than one-quarter work night jobs. One-third to one-half of leavers report serious problems in being able to provide food. Almost 20% report problems paying rent.

The *Post* report on the study adds a note: "But critics say the real moment of judgment will come later, when the strong economy weakens, when the easier cases have already left the rolls and only the difficult ones remain, or when the last term limits kick in for most states, about three years from now."

Meanwhile, on Aug. 2, Al Gore boasted that Federal agencies have hired 14,028 welfare recipients, exceeding the goal of 10,000. Most of the jobs are low-level work, and close to 4,000 are only temporary positions to work on the Year 2000 Census, which could grow to 10,000. The *Washington Post* noted that the jobs became available "after a round of budget and staff cuts that had helped reduce the number of clerical and other entry-level jobs at Federal agencies."

In Congress, Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) slammed the "reform," saying that "the welfare rolls are down 40%, but poverty is barely down." He added that there are "about 675,000 low-income citizens who have now been cut off medical assistance because of the welfare bill," and that there's a "precipitous decline of participation in the Food Stamp Program." Wellstone planned to bring amendments to the floor in early August to 1) require the U.S. government to track families that have left the welfare rolls, and 2) mandate that the Department of Agriculture report to Congress on the state of the Food Stamp and assistance to Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs.

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## U.S. ignored arrest of terror suspects in Sudan

U.S. officials knew that Sudan had rushed to apprehend the terrorists suspected to be responsible for the Aug. 7, 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya, according to revelations by the *New York Times* on July 30. The Sudanese government arrested two suspects entering the country from Nairobi, and carrying false Pakistani passports. American

officials were notified of the arrests, but disdained the Sudanese offer to help with the investigation, and did nothing. The *New York Times* reports: "Sudanese officials have said the United States had been notified that the two suspects were in custody, and American law enforcement officials have confirmed the account."

Nonetheless, the United States went ahead and launched a "retaliatory" bombing against the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, provoking an angry Sudan to release the suspects, who were sent to Pakistan.

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## Export rules threaten satellite industry

New national export restrictions, put in place in the wake of hysteria over China's alleged theft of U.S. satellite technology, are threatening the more than \$30 billion U.S. satellite industry. The Aug. 1 *New York Times* headlined its coverage of the issue that day, "Export Rules Are Said To Be a Threat to Satellite Industry."

On March 15, export licenses were shifted from the Commerce Department to the State Department, as commercial communications satellites became "munitions," in terms of export controls. (It should be recalled that it was the *New York Times* that started the anti-China hysteria last spring that led to the change.)

The U.S. satellite industry employs hundreds of thousands of people, and had an \$11.5 billion trade surplus last year. "If the State Department does not change the way it does export licensing, the U.S., which has dominated commercial space, will lose position and it will have an effect for a decade," Dr. Richard Aubrecht, vice chairman of Moog, Inc., was quoted by the *Times*. His company, which supplies parts for satellites, has already lost business.

On July 16, Lockheed Martin Corp. received a letter from the Société Européenne des Satellites, saying that its urgent need for a television broadcasting satellite made it impossible to wait for Lockheed to obtain the needed permit. The situation is so absurd, that Lockheed needed a license to send defective parts it had imported, back to a German manufacturer. The article relates how

contracts from consortia that include Chinese partners are being lost because of license delays.

## Neo-cons trying to muscle in on the Reform Party

Garry Wills, in a syndicated column in the *New York Post* on Aug. 1, reported on the side-shows at the previous week's Reform Party convention, where some of party founder Ross Perot's people were shut out of the leadership, and replaced by allies of former professional wrestler, Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Wills reported that John O'Sullivan, former editor of *National Review* and now the director of Margaret Thatcher's New Atlantic Initiative, has been pressing for a neo-conservative candidate to be picked by the Reform Party, in order to create a power base for the Conservative Revolution outside of the Republican Party. Wills also reported that supporters of Pat Buchanan, who is currently seeking the Republican nomination, were out in force, and that Buchanan and Ventura had recently met, and, presumably discussed a possible Reform Party nomination of Buchanan for President. The big attraction, as Wills noted, is the Reform Party's automatic ballot status in all 50 states, plus a guaranteed \$12 million in Federal Election Commission funding, based on the fact that Perot's previous candidacies had won more than 5% of the vote.

## Goldin vows to fight NASA deep budget cuts

NASA Administrator Dan Goldin, who has spent the past five years trying to prove to the White House that under Al Gore's "reinventing government" insanity, the space agency could do more with less and less money, made an about-face on July 27, and vowed that he would fight deep cuts in the FY2000 NASA budget that were passed on July 26 by the House Committee on Appropriations.

The House committee passed a NASA budget of \$12.3 billion, which is \$1.325 bil-

lion less than the White House had requested (an 11% cut), which itself was a \$100 million cut from the current budget. The committee cancelled the Space Infrared Telescope Facility, which, after the Chandra observatory which was launched in July, is the fourth and last of NASA's great observatories. Smaller science missions would be cancelled, as well as the \$150 million plans for upgrading Shuttle safety. Future unmanned Mars missions would be scrapped, and other projects, delayed.

An angry Goldin told the press: "NASA employees get up every day to achieve what most think is impossible. They have risen to the challenge of smaller budgets. And this is the reward the NASA team gets? Not only is this cut devastating to NASA's programs, it is a knife in the heart of employee morale. . . . NASA continues to deliver amazing scientific discoveries and reach new heights of exploration. To many Americans, NASA is a cornerstone of our national pride. But there is nothing to be proud of in this budget."

## Rabbis defend Muslim anti-terror appointee

Los Angeles Jewish leaders, many of them rabbis, blasted the decision of Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) to withdraw his appointment of a Muslim, Salam Al-Marayati, from the National Commission on Terrorism, after an hysterical explosion from the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. Many Jewish leaders in Los Angeles hurried to defend Al-Marayati, who is well known for his dialogues with the Jewish community. Al-Marayati's wife Laila was recently appointed by President Clinton to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

The editor of the *Jewish Journal* was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* asserting that the ZOA speaks only for a small minority of American Jews. California's largest black newspaper, the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, ran an editorial headlined: "Gephardt Caves In to Pressure from the ZOA." A late-July meeting to address Gephardt's action was held at the Los Angeles Islamic Center and was attended by 26 rabbis.

**PRESIDENT CLINTON** will be going to India after its fall election. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Karl Inderfurth announced on July 28 that "the purpose of the President's travel is to set the stage for ensuring a stronger relationship with the region."

**LINDA TRIPP** was indicted on July 30, by a Maryland grand jury, on one count of illegal interception of a telephone conversation, and on a second count of illegally disclosing the contents of that conversation, to *Newsweek*. The interception count involves the taping of a phone conversation on Dec. 22, 1997, after her lawyer had told her that taping calls was illegal in Maryland. Tripp had begun taping the calls at the urging of New York spook stringer and literary agent Lucianne Goldberg.

**A BALTIMORE POLICE** officer, Louis Hopson returned to work on July 26, after being suspended without pay for three years. Hopson, an 18-year police veteran, was targeted for his outspoken criticism of racism in the police department. Last December, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission had ruled in Hopson's favor concerning charges of racially motivated punishment of black officers.

**VIRGINIA PRISONS** Director Ron Angelone retaliated against a minimum security prisoner by sending him to the state's Red Onion Supermax prison, after the inmate had embarrassed him, according to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* of July 29. The inmate had corrected Angelone's assertion that cold air rises and hot air sinks. Angelone's action is proof that the Supermax prisons are intended for cruel punishment.

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY'S** new jobs are mostly "substantially below-average wages" (\$25,000), according to a study reported by the *Los Angeles Times* on July 26. "Los Angeles County's job base has been increasingly shifting toward the lower end," the study asserts.