

By Joel Bleifuss

Oil dogs learn new tricks

It appears that a hastily regrouped oil industry is using the issue of rising gasoline prices to shift the public focus from Alaska's sinking seals to America's shrinking wallets. Industry officials, with the help of the media, have drawn attention to the tenuous link between the temporary disruption in the flow of Alaskan oil and the sudden and severe hike in the price of gasoline. Domestic crude oil prices did rise after the March 24 disaster. But it took only four days and the resumption of limited tanker traffic in Prince William Sound to return crude prices to their pre-disaster levels. Gas was set to rise anyway. The price of crude oil has gone up by 50 percent since January 1, in large part as a result of OPEC's successful attempt to reduce oil production. But in molding public policy, it is perception, not substance, that counts. The wreck of the tanker *Exxon Valdez* provided ammunition to environmentalists who oppose further oil exploration. But that appears to have been effectively countered by the oil industry's phony gas crisis, which is giving nervous consumers the impression that petroleum-dependent America must have unrestricted access to a dependable supply of oil—of course with proper and, as the oil industry never fails to point out, expensive environmental controls.

Explore the Arctic: Which brings up the subject of those oil reserves waiting to be tapped in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). In the weeks since the spill, the *Wall Street Journal* has dutifully reported the oil industry's line on exploiting the arctic wilderness: "The ANWR is especially crucial, because production at Prudhoe Bay, the largest U.S. oil field, opened a dozen years ago, has peaked"; "The ANWR is the oil industry's most fervent hope for a big find"; "[Its] 3 billion barrels would allow companies to pump 1 million barrels of oil a day for the next 30 years." As Charles Maxwell, an oil strategist for W. Lawrence & Co., told the paper, "If there is a *real* [emphasis added] tightness in supply, gasoline prices will skyrocket and [someone will] yell to the politicians, 'Damn it, open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.'"

Quick fix: Such statements lead one to conclude that ANWR reserves will provide the fix needed to sustain the U.S. oil addiction into some comfortably indefinite future. But Energy Department estimates indicate that the refuge contains barely enough reserves to supply the nation's oil needs for 200 days. Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute, a group that supports conservation and the development of alternative energy sources, wonders if this supply of oil is worth the resulting environmental destruction. "What is one to infer from the collision between supposedly growing demands and declining domestic oil output?" asks Lovins. "That the bottom of the barrel must be scraped, in the refuge and everywhere else, because there is, as the Interior Department leads one to suppose, simply no alternative? Or that we should instead thoughtfully consider whether postponing the ultimate depletion of the nation's oil resources for 200 days is worth the refuge, given that depletion of the finite resource is inevitable and that whatever alternatives will be used to replace that oil will need to be adopted anyway." Somehow the oil industry has turned one environmental disaster into an argument for another.

Iran-contra's rotten apples

A document released in the trial of Oliver North indicates that George Bush played an active role in arranging alternative funding for the contras at a time when such activity was illegal. The document in question is a 42-page summary of secret papers that the Bush administration, under the pretext of national security, has refused to release in the North trial. According to the document, at a Feb. 7, 1985, White House meeting it was decided that President Reagan would send Honduran President Roberto Suazo a letter that would offer "several enticements to Honduras in exchange for its continued support of the Nicaraguan resistance. These enticements included expedited delivery of military supplies ordered by Honduras, a phased release of withheld economic assistance funds and other support." The document indicates that later in February Reagan sent such a letter to Suazo via U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte, the man who is now Bush's ambassador to Mexico. The White House also decided that this letter would be followed up by a visit to Honduras by a government "emissary" who would personally brief Suazo "on the



Graffiti attacking Tribal Chairman Peter MacDonald decorates a feed store on the Navajo Nation.

Deposing the chairman of the Navajo nation

WINDOW ROCK, AZ—"Mutton yes, golf balls no!" shouted 350 angry Navajos as they marched on Tribal Chairman Peter MacDonald's office here last month demanding his removal as leader of the 200,000-member Navajo Nation. The protesters were met outside the tribe's sandstone administrative building by 80 MacDonald supporters. The two sides waged a bullhorn war in Navajo and English across a line of Navajo police.

This confrontation, one of the largest in memory for the nation, stems from investigations by the U.S. Justice Department, the U.S. Inspector General, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Federal Bureau of Investigation that have linked MacDonald to corruption, fraud and fiscal favoritism. In response to the unfolding scandal, the Navajo Tribal Council voted on February 17 to place MacDonald on administrative leave, an action MacDonald claims is invalid. The vote initiated a legislative power struggle between MacDonald and the council that has paralyzed the government, plunging the country's largest Indian tribe into a political crisis unprecedented in the Navajo Nation's 120-year modern history.

From February 17 to March 31, when Interim Chairman Leonard Haskie gained authorization to sign Navajo government checks, the Navajo Nation was unable to conduct business or pay its employees. The anti-MacDonald demonstration was planned as a rally in support of low-level tribal employees,

the group hardest hit by the fiscal crisis.

The tribal schism is also marked by differences over Navajo economic development, an issue concisely expressed by the marchers' slogan, "Mutton yes, golf balls no." Traditional Navajo sheepherders, dry-land farmers and the unemployed live on the harsh desert land, where mutton is a common food. They are disaffected by MacDonald's high-profile economic development. MacDonald's supporters claim the seven new trading posts and recent land acquisitions developed under his administration have benefited tribal sovereignty.

But it was the largest and most recent land deal that brought federal investigators to MacDonald's door. In 1987 the tribe bought the 491,000-acre Big Boquillas ranch. This purchase of what was Arizona's largest ranch turned a quick (five minute) \$7.5-million profit for Tom Tracy, the middleman who arranged the deal. Some claim that MacDonald was given kickbacks from the deal. MacDonald's son, Peter "Rocky" MacDonald, told the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs in February that after the transaction MacDonald was given up to \$125,000 in cash and a new BMW. Rocky told the committee that cash payments to his father were referred to as "golf balls" during the secret dealings between MacDonald and Tracy, a Phoenix oilman.

MacDonald, elected by a slim majority to a fourth term as chairman in 1986, claims the federal accusations and the Tribal Council's actions are opportunist attempts to remove from power a strong advo-

cate of tribal sovereignty. During the demonstration, members of the pro-MacDonald forces said the Council was making a mockery of the legislative rules passed down from the tribal elders.

But the opposition protesters pointed to MacDonald's alleged abuses of power. The demonstrators said they were defending the Navajo people from a "dictator." One sign read, "Go home, Marcos."

The council majority, nicknamed "49ers" for the 49 members of the 88-member council that voted against MacDonald, has gradually acquired more authority, despite MacDonald's attempts to replace tribal judges and attorneys with his own sympathizers. But the ouster of MacDonald is hampered by the lack of a constitution-like document. Consequently, the governmental crisis has opened up an unknown area of tribal legislation, filling local newspapers with complicated legal proceedings.

Joe Shirley Jr., a council member from Chinle, said the council is confident the federal courts will decide against MacDonald, a man who has "done a lot of damage to the Navajo Nation." On April 7 MacDonald was evicted from the offices he had spent \$700,000 refurbishing. The first court decision, from a grand jury in Phoenix looking into the Big Boquillas deal, is expected on May 1.

The Navajo people are confused, angry and ashamed. "This is Navajo against Navajo," an elder woman sitting away from the demonstration said. "We should be working together on problems of alcoholism and poverty, not waging war on ourselves like this."

—Peter F. Sisler

St. Louis clinic mobilizes for choice

When the Missouri legislature approved a fetal rights amendment in 1986, the staff members at Reproductive Health Services (RHS) knew their organization would be

on the front lines of the long-running abortion rights battle. This month the non-profit St. Louis abortion clinic, which successfully challenged the law in the Missouri courts, is headed for a Supreme Court showdown.

But RHS has waged its pro-choice battle outside of the courts as well. Through a unique public

relations campaign, the RHS staff has helped mobilize local and national support for its case, *Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services*, and for the pro-choice movement in general.

The stakes are high. Because the Missouri legislation is all-encompassing—it declares that life starts at conception—the case provides

the Supreme Court justices with a chance to fully review the landmark 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* decision, which legalized abortion.

Anti-abortion forces are banking on Ronald Reagan's three Supreme Court appointees to provide the votes that will overturn *Roe*. Faced with this threat, RHS searched for new tactics to bolster its cause.

"We knew from the start that our case was going all the way to the Supreme Court," B.J. Isaacson-Jones, RHS' executive director, told *In These Times*. "Slowly we began to develop strategies to mobilize our supporters. We saw this as a golden opportunity and began to raise money for dramatically expanded community education programs. We believe that at this point in time it's incredibly important to get women to speak out."

Along with encouraging patients to send pro-choice messages to the president and Congress, RHS has begun to curry media attention. Each patient is given a yellow card, asking if she would be willing to speak about her abortion experience to the news media. According to Isaacson-Jones, thousands of

women have agreed to be interviewed. "Since we began doing this ... everyone on our staff has really seen the value of opening up the agency. For too long the anti-abortionists have been a highly visible and vocal minority. We are just now able to offer our side of the story."

In addition, the clinic appealed for support in an advertisement, "An open letter to 21 million women," that was published in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *Washington Post* and the *Boston Globe*. Written by Isaacson-Jones, the letter has raised nearly \$100,000 for RHS public education programs.

RHS, one of three abortion providers in St. Louis, serves an eight-state area. According to Isaacson-Jones, the agency counsels about 15,000 women and families each year and last year performed about 8,480 abortions.

Long a target of anti-abortion protesters, RHS has trained escorts to lead women through demonstrations. In 1986 the agency's suburban West County clinic was fire-bombed. No arrests were made in that case.

"Until very recently people did

not take the cries of pro-choice people seriously. The public thought we were crying wolf," says Isaacson-Jones. "Now I feel like the sleeping giant has awakened."

Carol Downer, executive director of the California-based Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers, says the *Webster* case has revived the pro-choice movement around the country. But she fears the movement may be too late. Downer argues that until the mid-'80s abortion rights were a low priority among women's groups and left politicians. In addition, many abortion providers, assuming abortion rights were safe, rejected political action.

Downer applauds the RHS public outreach program, adding that abortion providers are now forced to develop public relations skills. "We always knew the wolf was at our door, but it has been very difficult to arouse public support. This case, and the sense that now we are really threatened, has mobilized the forces," she says. "There is a tremendous outpouring of energy right now. We must hold onto that." —Maggie Garb

The last temptation of Pinochet

SANTIAGO, CHILE—As autumn arrives here, with its enveloping cloud of pollution, the approximately two dozen political parties in the country are engaged in a never-ending series of closed-door meetings—proposing candidates, planning coalitions and defining strategies for the December 14 presidential election. The opposition's hard-won unity and the massive mobilization responsible for the October electoral victory over Gen. Augusto Pinochet (see *In These Times*, Oct. 19, 1988) is dissipating. Politics has left the streets for the party headquarters, where coalition leaders haggle over the apportionment of legislative candidates, ambassadorships, control of ministries and the many other positions that a new government will inherit.

October's resounding vote to end Pinochet's decade and a half of rule and the government's recognition of its defeat has altered the choreography of power. Pinochet should, by all accounts, be a political cadaver, abandoned by most of his allies, alone in the palace recalling the days when he called all the shots.

It is, most likely, Pinochet's last year in power. He is barred from running for another term by his own constitution. But if there's one lesson to be learned from his 15 years of unlimited power, it's to not underestimate this cunning 73-year-old general.

In a January interview with the French daily *Le Monde*, Pinochet compared himself to the Roman dictator Cincinnatus, who after winning many battles for Rome retired peacefully to plow the land, but was later called back by the besieged republic to save it. This historical anal-

ogy was not taken lightly by those Chileans who are convinced that Pinochet is intent on staying in power.

The year began with internal elections for a presidential candidate to represent the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), largest of 17 parties that comprise the opposition coalition.

PDC President Patricio Aylwin, a seasoned politician who supported the overthrow of democratically elected President Salvador Allende in 1973 and who represents the more conservative wing of the party, won the election easily. But Aylwin's victory came amid charges by two more moderate opponents of massive fraud and irregularities. The ensuing scandal reached such proportions that the opposition is openly divided as to the viability of a PDC candidate.

Aylwin's candidacy for the presidency is expected to be supported, if not enthusiastically, by all parties of the opposition coalition, including the Marxist-Leninist Almeyda Socialist Party. Nevertheless, tensions are developing in the coalition, with the left accusing the PDC of "hegemonizing" the electoral process.

The right is also beset with conflicts. Dispirited and fragmented after the plebiscite, it is in disarray. The odds-on favorite as candidate

Gen. Augusto Pinochet



of the *Pinochetistas* is the quiet treasury minister, Hernan Buchi. The darling of the international financial community for his adroit management of the Chilean economy and his efficient repayment of the external debt, Buchi has yet to declare his candidacy. But his close identification with the regime and lack of political experience may hinder his candidacy. So, too, may Buchi's eccentric behavior. The 40-year-old bureaucrat does not own any property, sports a Prince Valiant haircut and uses public transportation to go to work. Preliminary polls indicate that Buchi is running a close second to Aylwin.

The only thing on which everybody, from left to right, seems to agree is that Pinochet's authoritarian constitution must be amended. As the Christian Democratic weekly *Hoy* aptly put it, under the present constitution, when the new president is inaugurated Pinochet will move 100 yards down the street to the Ministry of Defense where he will work as commander in chief of the armed forces. In the afternoons he can stroll from the Ministry of Defense to the Congress, where, according to the constitution, he will be senator for life, and listen to the debates. Then, if there's a law he doesn't like, later that afternoon he can veto it in the National Security Council.

So what is the aging general up to? One thing is clear. Pinochet will not resign as commander in chief of the armed forces. And from that position he could, undoubtedly, engineer a return to power. As a prominent rightist put it, "Pinochet is still in a process of making decisions." As an opposition weekly headlined two weeks ago, this is "the last temptation of Pinochet."

—Marcelo Montecino

'conditions' attached to the expedited military deliveries, economic assistance and other support." The document strongly infers that this emissary was then-Vice President Bush. According to the document, on March 16 Bush went to Honduras and told Suazo that Reagan, as promised in the February letter, had ordered "expedited delivery of U.S. military items to Honduras, that currently withheld economic assistance for Honduras should be released, that the U.S. would provide from its own military stocks critical security assistance items that had been ordered by Honduran armed forces, and that several security programs under way for Honduran security forces would be enhanced."

Who, me?: Bush has denied that he played any role in providing covert aid to the contras. If the document is accurate—and the Bush administration says it is—then the president is a liar. Last year Bush went on record: "I knew nothing of the shipments by the so-called private network of arms dealers to the contras, as the [congressional] Iran-contra report points out on page 502." The *New York Times*' Stephen Engleberg, as a confirmation of Bush's assertion, writes, "That report stated, 'There is no evidence that Vice President Bush knew about either the contra resupply effort or the diversion of funds to the democratic resistance.'" But Engleberg, like too many other journalists, fails to point out that this statement is found in the "Minority Report," a special chapter of the Iran-contra committee report where the administration's Republican defenders—like Rep. Henry Hyde of Illinois and Rep. Dick Cheney of Wyoming, the current secretary of defense—tried to place the Iran-contra scandal in the best possible light. In fact the subsection of the Minority Report that exonerates Bush is titled "Who did what to help the democratic resistance."

In the loop: According to Malcolm Byrne, an analyst at the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., the documents released during the North trial indicate that Bush was "entirely in the loop on the contra issue." As Byrne told *In These Times*, "Bush keeps saying, 'Take a look on page 502.' But the Iran-contra committee did not clear him as he and the minority report suggests. According to sources on the committee, both the Democrats and Republicans on the committee studiously avoided digging into what Bush's role was and drawing conclusions. We have known Bush was aware of some of these efforts to support the contras, but for the first time we know that he really had a direct role. It is clear from documents that came out at the trial that Bush was intimately involved in this quid pro quo agreement with Honduras. This newest document also goes into details that weren't known before about several operations. It fleshes out [former Secretary of State George] Shultz's and [former Secretary of Defense Casper] Weinberger's roles—that now turn out to be much more substantial than they have admitted. It makes clear that it was a governmentwide effort to keep the contras supplied in spite of the Boland Amendment." Research assistance by Jim McNeill



Raw Marx: Los Angeles artist Marvin Grayson spent six years carving this larger-than-life Karl Marx statue out of a block of Honduran mahogany. Grayson says he portrayed Marx naked because he wanted "to show both his physical and intellectual strength." But to some critics, Grayson has crafted a full-frontal Marx who, like a Greek god, is both human and divine. In the *People's Daily World*, Steve Grossman writes: "In its presence, one feels a kind of awe, almost as one might feel in the presence of the great genius himself; yet, while larger than life, the figure retains its human scale, suggesting a sort of dialectical description of Marx—he was mortal, merely human, yet simultaneously, much more, a giant...a Marx unbound to fashion, time or place, a Marx for all times. And a Marx, moreover, emphatically and gloriously human."