

old ally, dumped us for the Soviets in 1975. Prior to that, Siad Barre's army received its arms from the Soviets. The U.S. mission failed because the United States did not coordinate with the U.N. or respect Somali politics.

G. Embree  
Los Angeles

*Michael Klare responds: While G. Embree makes some interesting points, nothing he says dilutes my main findings: (1) an ever-growing abundance of light weapons is fueling ethnic and regional wars, making them deadlier and harder to stop; (2) the light weapons available on international markets are increasingly lethal in their effects; (3) the world community has done almost nothing to stem the global trade in light weapons. With respect to Rwanda, while it is certainly true that many killings have been performed with machetes and other primitive weapons, much of the slaughter is the work of Hutu militias armed with government-supplied assault guns.*

## No threat?

Having just read Robert Parry's hysterical article "Oliver's army" (ITT, June 27), I must say I think he is resorting to the role of a demagogue himself by exaggerating the danger of Oliver North being elected to the U.S. Senate seat for Virginia.

The fact is that even prominent Republicans like Sen. John Warner have repudiated North, and ex-President Ronald Reagan has gone so far as to brand North as the liar he is. I have never been a fan of Warner or Reagan, but their influence in this race has been healthy to the extent that it has helped establish an environment in which North cannot win. The bigger problem is that the Democrats here in Virginia have become so corrupt with power that they can offer the voters no better alternative than a gutless ward-

heeler like Sen. Chuck Robb for reelection. That is the real reason why so many Virginians are turning in disgust to independent candidates such as Marshall Coleman and L. Douglas Wilder, or is that stark reality too inconvenient for Parry?

Paul Hickey  
Fairfax, Va.

## Self-imposed impasse

A brief look at history goes a long way toward explaining the present implosion of the Clinton health care proposal. National health care has been on the agenda since the days of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman. Medicare and Medicaid date from Lyndon Johnson, and every recent congressional session has seen proposals for extended coverage.

No serious effort to extend such coverage has been made in the interim because the period since the '40s found U.S. companies without effective competition in the world markets. Many such companies gave union workers health benefits in lieu of wage increases. As a result, there were no major sources of pressure on Congress. That is, until the '70s and '80s.

As foreign competition grew, leading businessmen such as Lee Iacocca found that the health benefits obtained through union bargaining were developing into a major burden on production costs, with adverse effects on competitiveness.

From the beginning, government has been a favorite resort for shifting burdens from the backs of business. From roads, canals and land grants to

the outright extension of monies to ailing firms, business has always looked to government for support. So it is now with health care.

The Clintons, however, have fumbled the opportunity. Aside from flawed cost analysis, they propose placing a mandated burden on business. No wonder major business groups object. Single-payer would avoid this problem by spreading the costs over the entire population. Despite partisan cries of socialism, it is more than likely that businesses, both large and small, would once again be happy to accept this transfer of burden from their backs—after all, their major competitors have not found this solution unacceptable. Or is this too rational for Congress?

Carl Schiffer  
Rye, N.Y.

## Correction

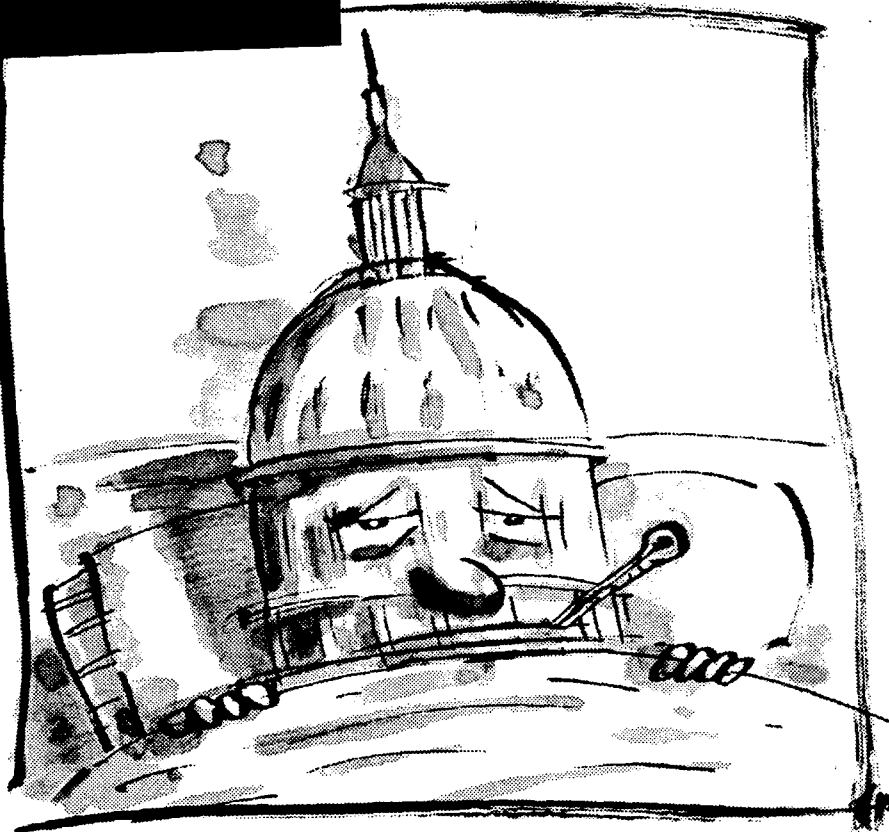
In Miles Harvey's "Bummer Vacations" (ITT, June 27) writer Joy Williams should have been quoted as describing the Everglades as a "once astounding ecosystem." An ellipsis should have followed the phrase.

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan



# InSHORT



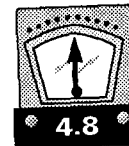
## CRIPPLING THE SINGLE-PAYER PLAN

**T**he good news: supporters of single-payer, Canadian-style national health insurance will probably see the House vote on their proposal this session. The bad news: it will almost certainly be voted down. Since the alternative health care plans are weak, single-payer advocates are now focusing their attention on efforts to guarantee that states will have the right to implement Canadian-style plans. While all of the bills that have emerged from committee include this state option, two of them would cripple the alternative with exemptions and restrictions. The bill that came out of the House Ways and Means committee, for example, excludes employees of big, multi-state corporations—roughly one-fourth of the labor force. It also establishes a complicated procedure for states to apply for federal permission, including a three-year delay before Medicare recipients could be included. By excluding so many citizens, state plans could not gain maximum efficiency.



By Woody Igou

**Holy terror—or it's called politics, dear**  
Recently converted Christian-right lapdog Sen. Bob Dole has accused Democrats of "appealing to religious bigotry" in their attacks on the religious right.



Dole was responding to comments by Rep. Vic Fazio (D-CA) and

Texas Gov. Ann Richards describing the religious right as "fire-breathing radicals" and "hate mongers." Of course, these comments were a response to the Rev. Jerry Falwell's selling of baseless videotapes accusing President Clinton of murdering political opponents and to the Christian Coalition's description of the president's inauguration as a "repudiation of our forefathers' covenant with God."

*Dole's running mate in '96—  
Jim Bakker, he's pale and rested.*

## Timeless temper

Karate instructor Teruyuki Higa has been charged with sexually assaulting a woman in New York because of the T-shirt she was wearing.

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