

MLK day is favored by Byrd

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Leader Robert C. Byrd Jr., who once described Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a "self-seeking rabble-rouser," supports creation of a federal holiday in honor of the late civil rights leader.

So does Republican Sen. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, formerly a towering symbol of Southern opposition to civil rights legislation, who said in 1966 that King was a "notorious troublemaker and intermeddler."

Byrd of West Virginia, Thurmond and other Southern senators who once found mention of King's name anathema have come full circle, and now support of a holiday honoring the Nobel Prize winner.

But not North Carolina's Republican Sen. Jesse Helms.

On his own 62nd birthday Tuesday, Helms not only declared that King was influenced, if not controlled, by advisers known to be communists, he suggested that the late President John F. Kennedy and the late Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy thought so, too.

In a bitter reply, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., said, "I am appalled by the attempts of some to misappropriate the name of my brother Robert Kennedy and misuse it as part of this smear campaign."

And Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y., was moved at one point Tuesday to call material about King distributed by Helms "filth" and throw it to the floor.

To be sure, Helms has waged other, often lonely losing battles, which have turned the mildest-mannered of senators against him for his tactics, most recently a filibuster last winter against a nickel-a-gallon tax on gasoline supported by both parties and President Reagan.

Other fights have included opposition to legalized abortion, extension of the 1965

Voting Rights Act and suing to desegregate public schools.

But this time, seasoned political observers of both parties express some bafflement about the wily Helms' reasons for opposing legislation approved 338 to 90 in the House and backed by nearly all Democratic and Republican leaders in the Senate.

"We frankly don't have any idea why he is doing this," said one senior aide to the Senate Republican leadership. "It would seem to be self-defeating."

There is, of course, Helms' pending tough re-election fight next year against popular Democratic North Carolina Gov. Jim Hunt. The race is likely to be one of the most expensive in U.S. political history.

"This is a sure-fire direct mail fund-raiser," said one Senate Republican official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

By leading a highly-visible battle with echoes of his early political campaigns in North Carolina, Helms probably guarantees a strong turnout next November among his hard core conservative constituents in the state.

And Helms concedes that he has received a lot of black support. "I face reality. They (black voters) have a history of voting Democratic down the line," he said recently.

But the fight over King's birthday would also seem to alienate moderate Democrats and Republicans who might otherwise be swayed to support Helms.

In any event, Helms has isolated himself from Reagan, who has said he would sign the King holiday bill into law, along with the broad middle of the Republican Senate.

One GOP moderate, Charles McC Mathias Jr. of Maryland, described Helms' battle as "his personal enterprise."



Something fishy

Something looks a little fishy as Simon Garza, 89, strolls through the rain in downtown San Antonio. This mural is painted on the side of a downtown building. Apparently, the recent rains have not confined Garza to his home.

AP Laser photo

EPA approves burning at chemical waste site

HARLINGEN, Texas (AP) — The federal government has given tentative approval to the burning of some toxic chemical waste at the southern Texas Coast that critics contend could damage the multi-million dollar seafood industry in the Gulf of Mexico.

Alan Rubin, a spokesman for the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, told The Valley Morning Star that Rebecca Hammer, the acting EPA assistant administrator for water, had signed a tentative permit for the burning of polychlorinated biphenyl, or PCB.

Final approval, he said, cannot be given until after public hearings in Brownsville and Mobile, Ala., Rubin said.

A spokeswoman for Greenpeace, an environmental group, said the decision was premature because the U.S. has no regulations for governing the burning of toxic waste materials at sea.

"In our mind, ocean incineration is little more than ocean dumping," said Greenpeace spokeswoman Elizabeth Otto of Denver. "We're reducing the bulk and dumping what's left. I want to be open-minded, but I'm not all that sure they will be able to come up with data that will be valid."

"They'll have numbers."

but whether they will be able to later pinpoint additional levels of PCB's and say it was a result of the burnings, I'm afraid they will not be able to prove it either way."

Rubin said the EPA made several unexpected changes before issuing the tentative permit. A requirement was added that an EPA inspector be on board the incineration ship when the burn is conducted.

EPA will thoroughly analyze every load of chemical waste that is to be burned so that the government knows exactly what substances will be burned and their toxicity, Rubin said. EPA also will monitor the air and water around the burning, he said.

He said the agency invited Ms. Otto to participate in gathering the initial data.

Ms. Otto said although she will participate in the EPA's fact-finding excursion, her organization remains "totally opposed to these permits."

Chemical Waste Management Inc. earlier conducted test burnings of the waste on two specially equipped ships 170 miles off the coast, near Port Isabel.

Bob Reincke, a spokesman for the Illinois-based company that will do the burning if it gets final approval, said the firm had not been notified of the tentative permit. But, he said, "we'd certainly be pleased to see the permit process move forward."

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Government contests professor's testimony

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP) — A federal judge allowed testimony about political violence in Central America although government lawyers argued it was irrelevant to the suit by five refugees seeking political asylum.

"Let the judge not realize this, this is considered an important case in Washington," said government lawyer Allen Hausman, trying to con-

vince U.S. District Judge Ricardo H. Hinojosa not to allow testimony by Michael Conroy.

"It's an important case in this courtroom," Hinojosa replied as he ruled that Conroy, a University of Texas specialist in Latin American economics and population migration, could testify.

The comment by Houseman indicates how important the case is to the government because of the

increasing numbers of Central Americans who are entering the U.S.

More than 90 percent of the non-Mexican aliens captured in this area are from El Salvador.

The aliens are "economic refugees" looking for jobs, the government claims. The aliens claim they left Central America because of political and religious persecution due to their membership in unions, church groups and

past government employment.

Lawyers representing the aliens are seeking to make permanent a temporary injunction issued in November 1981 which orders Immigration and Naturalization officials to inform aliens of their right to request political asylum.

"There is no way you can look at the economics and development of Central America without realizing

that the worst factor affecting those countries is political violence," Conroy testified.

Maps of Guatemala and El Salvador which he said showed the incidents of violence attributed to politically related violence were displayed by Conroy. "There is virtually no family which has not been touched by the terror of political violence," he said.

Powder found in judge's truck destroyed

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — A sheriff's department captain has been suspended for three days for ordering deputies to destroy some powder that they believed to be cocaine or heroin and that they found in a county judge's vehicle, authorities said.

Chief detective Fred Bonilla said that during an internal investigation a sheriff's captain said he ordered the deputies to flush the powder

down a commode before it could be analyzed because he thought it had been planted.

Sheriff Mike Davis on Monday suspended Capt. Willie Hill for three days as a result of the investigation.

"I made a bad decision, I have been disciplined," Hill said.

Davis said the two deputies should have contacted a criminal investigator rather than Hill,

whose 11½-year Sheriff's Department career has been spent in the civil division, which does not handle criminal matters. But the deputies were not disciplined, he said.

Davis ordered the investigation last week after being questioned by reporters, Bonilla said.

Davis said he didn't learn of the incident until late July or August, and conducted an investigation then. He blamed

district judges, whom he would not name, for resurrecting the issue and exaggerating it.

"All it is a vicious rumor by a couple of cheap politicians trying to get a couple more cheap politicians," he said.

Deputies Jim Boykin and Dwight Jefferson said they found the powder Feb. 26 while installing a two-way radio in County Judge Pat

O'Rourke's Toyota Land Cruiser.

"I have no earthly idea how it got there," said O'Rourke, who denies using drugs.

O'Rourke said he was out of town when the radio was installed, and he did not learn that a substance was found in his car until questioned about it by a reporter in late July.

Anti-nukes to march

NEW YORK (AP) — Non-violent civil disobedience will be the focal point of more than 100 anti-nuclear response marches, rallies and demonstrations around the nation this weekend, sponsors said.

The U.S. protests will be timed to coincide with demonstrations in Europe, said Dottie Kuntz, coordinator of the national clearinghouse of October Actions to Stop Euro-nukes.

Ms. Kuntz said Tuesday the largest demonstrations were scheduled for Boston; San Francisco; Washington, St. Louis; Orlando, Fla.; Austin, Texas; and Athens, Ga.

In addition, thousands of people were to march and rally at Sampson State Park near the Seneca Army Depot in Romulus, N.Y., she said.

The weekend of protest was to begin with a candlelight vigil Friday night in New York City.

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