

# The Speaker in the Black Helicopter

*For the Ultra-Right, Gingrich Is Just a Tool of the World Government Plot*

By Mary Jacoby

**I**N THE wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, a spate of editorials blamed House Speaker Newt Gingrich and his fellow conservatives for goading right-wing extremists into violence.

"Did Newt Do It?" the New Republic asked. The magazine said the congressman had given "aid and comfort" to citizen militias, adding: "The fringe . . . is clearly tuned into the Gingrich revolution."

There's just one problem with this line of attack. It ignores the opinions of the "fringe" for which it presumes to speak: the militia members, John Birchers and other conspiracy theorists loosely organized under the banner of "patriots," "constitutionalists" and "America Firsters."

Anyone who glances at the Spotlight, the weekly newspaper of the far-right Liberty Lobby (in which Timothy McVeigh once advertised the sale of a military-style rocket launcher), or the John Birch Society's New

*Mary Jacoby is a reporter for Roll Call.*

American, knows that the Beltway pundits have it all wrong. Gingrich is hardly the leader of their movement; in their eyes, he is actively working to subvert it.

Those with a paranoid bent are convinced that the Georgian is in cahoots with President Clinton, the Rockefellers, the Freemasons, the Council on Foreign Relations and the entire Eastern Establishment to abrogate the Constitution and forge a New World Order under the thumb of Jewish central bankers and the United Nations. To these folks, the Contract with America was a cleverly disguised attempt by the wealthy and powerful to impose their hidden agenda.

"We've got a bimbo like Newt Gingrich. He's part of the problem," says Bob Fletcher, spokesman for the Militia of Montana.

"The one thing that really bothers me about Gingrich is the fact that he is a CFR [Council on Foreign Relations] member," says Karen Brace of the Idaho Sovereignty Association, a secretive organization of states'-rights activists.

Texe Marrs, who runs a Christian education group called Living Truth Ministries in

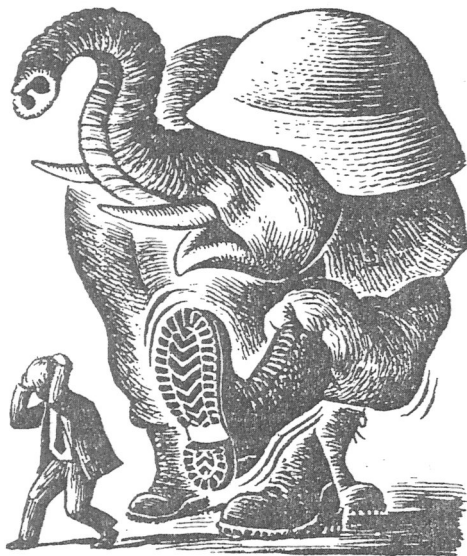
Austin, Tex., has a slightly different take. "We believe that the Gingrich who is a conservative is basically a media creation," he says. "We believe he's a Democrat."

Marrs has a shortwave radio show and publishing house whose most recent title is his book on Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Big Sister Is Watching You." His newsletter, called Flashpoint, asks: "Is House Speaker Newt Gingrich a New Ager? . . . A CFR member? . . . A globalist lackey? . . . Were Gingrich and Senator Dole following orders from above in promoting GATT and the World Trade Organization?"

**A**sk these people about their political heroes and Gingrich is not the answer. Neither is Bob Dole, Dick Armev or other Republican leaders. The Spotlight, in fact, has been "exposing" Gingrich for the last decade.

A February 1985 article warned that Gingrich was a liberal in sheep's clothing, plotting to take over the country: "A Rockefeller Republican is running for president and he's making no bones about it."

The far right first began beating up on Gin-



grich in 1985, when he and other House conservatives began supporting economic sanctions against the apartheid government of South Africa.

In 1990, the then-minority whip introduced a bill to tighten laws against drug-related crime by declaring a "national drug and crime emergency." In an interview, Montana's Fletcher accused Gingrich of trying to lay the groundwork for martial law, saying the bill

would have led to the "suspension of the Constitution."

Gingrich's support of the NAFTA and GATT trade agreements has also gotten him into hot water with the militia crowd, which fears that such "globalist" policies will erode American sovereignty. They are equally suspicious of the Conservative Opportunity Society he founded in the House in the early 1980s ("a front for the liberal Washington Post and the internationalist wing of the GOP," as the Spotlight put it). And they are unsettled by the speaker's association with futurists Alvin and Heidi Toffler and the fact that his half-sister is a lesbian activist.

After Gingrich became speaker in January, the New American published an article titled "Gingrich's Constitutional Con; The GOP's 'Contract with America' is fraught with peril for our nation." Fletcher and others believe that Gingrich's "drug emergency" bill, which died in committee, has been resurrected in the contract's anticrime measures.

While Gingrich is clearly no hero in militia land, Republican politics forces him to walk a tightrope with such groups, and his image problems with mainstream America will persist as long as he does not repudiate them. But it is important for national opinion-makers to understand the chasm between most House Republicans and the loony right. Gingrich and his GOP revolution may be controversial and provocative, but they are not the source of violent extremism.