

## Congressional Calendar by Barbara Dreyfuss and Susan Kokinda

### Congress reconvened

Congress reconvened on Jan. 22 after several weeks Christmas-New Years break. The major focus of activity was immediately the international events centered around the Middle East and Asia. On Wednesday Jan. 23 the House Armed Services Committee held closed door meetings with the Defense Intelligence Agency on Afghanistan, while the Senate Armed Services Committee was simultaneously receiving closed door briefings on the Middle East, the Indian Ocean and South Asia.

The House Foreign Relations Committee had scheduled a special meeting with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance for Wednesday Jan. 23 on Afghanistan. However, these were unexpectedly cancelled. Instead the Committee will hear testimony by the President of the U.S. Olympic Committee on President Carter's demand that the U.S. boycott the summer Olympics in Moscow if the Soviet Union does not pull its troops out of Afghanistan. Congressman Zablocki (D-Wisc), who is chairman of the committee, introduced a resolution as soon as Congress reconvened, calling on the legislative body to follow the President's request. The House Foreign Relations Committee will start marking up the resolution after scheduled Jan. 23 testimony and floor action is expected almost immediately.

### Congress to review expanding trade with China

Granting most favored trade status to the Peoples' Republic of China is one of the first items on Congress' agenda. On Jan. 22 the Senate began to debate the issue,



*Congressman Lester Wolff (D-N.Y.)*

with many of the Senators stating their endorsement of the change in trade status. However Senate action was postponed until the House rules on the issue. Most favored nation status would allow China to qualify for tariff reductions already available to many nations.

Action in the House was postponed until Thursday Jan. 24, when House Republicans objected that the measure would violate Congressional budget requirements. The objection was that the reduced tariffs granted to China would mean that Treasury revenues would go below the floor established in the budget resolution for this year. The House Rules Committee scheduled a meeting to consider a budget waiver request Jan. 22, so that House action could take place before the end of Congress's first week back.

The Republican action however was really prompted by concern over the ramifications of the Carter administration's policy with China. House Republicans wanted to eval-

uate President Carter's State of the Union speech before acting on the most favored nation status bill. "We need to know what our foreign policy is" declared House Minority Whip Michel (R-Ill).

As the House considers this bill, members of a House delegation will be returning from a two week tour of Asia. Led by Congressman Lester Wolff (D-NY), chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, the delegation included Representatives Gilman (R-NY), Danielson (D-Calif), Jeffords (RVT-Al), Myers (D-Pa) and Hyde (R-Ill). The Congressmen have been to Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, China and Taiwan. The group's stated aim was to assess "regional stability" and Asian perceptions of "security and defense".

### Stevenson attacks economic embargoes; calls for military buildup

At hearings of his subcommittee on international finance Jan. 22, Senator Adlai Stevenson (D-Ill) attacked the administration's economic embargoes while calling for conventional military buildup in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. "Embargoes, like the freezing of Iranian assets, feed the general impression of the world that the U.S. is impulsive, unpredictable, and an unreliable supplier of goods and services... embargoes against exports of U.S. goods produce exports of U.S. jobs and capital. The embargoes will have an adverse affect on U.S. balance of payments deficits. The dollar is weakened by these actions, they

may require taxes and Treasury borrowings to support the farmer and effected agribusinesses for a long time."

Stevenson added that historically, whenever the U.S. embargoes technologies to the Soviet Union, the Soviets eventually develop the capacity themselves. He then pointed out: "Little is left, short of military action, for the next time the United States is moved to make the Soviet Union pay a price for its transgressions."

Stevenson proposed two approaches as alternatives to the Carter administration's policies—both at least as provocative as the President's, if not more so. Stevenson in fact endorsed using food as a political weapon and called for a vast military buildup for longer-range confrontation policies. "We should seriously consider making the Commodity Credit Corporation our own National Grain Board with exclusive authority to market U.S. wheat and feed grains in the world ... in this hungry and dangerous world, the United States disarms itself uniquely and unilaterally by leaving the sale and distribution of American food to multilateral traders. At least the CCC should be made the exclusive agent for grain sales."

Stevenson's military build-up proposals included establishing naval bases in Egypt and Somalia, placing marines on U.S. naval vessels in the Indian Ocean, and supporting an international consortium of arms support for Pakistan and the Afghan rebels. Stevenson specified that China should be included in the consortium.

Stevenson held two days of hearings Jan. 22 and 23 to review the administration's policy in regard to "Russian imperialism."

## Hearings slated for TV deregulation

Hearings are scheduled for February 6 in the communications subcommittee of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee on H.R. 6103, Rep. Lionel Vanderling's proposal to deregulate the television broadcast industry. Vanderling has long been an opponent of the equal time and reasonable access provisions of current communications laws. He feels that the networks should have the power to decide whom they sell air time to. Vanderling's opponents point out that, unlike radio and newspapers, the three networks have a virtual, licensed monopoly over national broadcasting. Such elimination of equal time provisions would prevent candidates the networks did not want to cover from actually getting television time.

Similar legislation failed to move last year and there is not judged to be more support for it

this year. In fact, sources close to Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz) report that Republicans on the Senate Commerce Committee are pressing for oversight hearings to strengthen the Federal Communication Commission's ability to enforce reasonable time and equal access. Goldwater, who is ranking Republican on the Communications subcommittee, has reportedly sent a letter to Communications subcommittee chairman Ernest Hollings (D-SC) and Commerce Committee chairman Howard Cannon (D-Nev) urging action on his proposed hearings.

At least one of the presidential campaign committees, Citizens for LaRouche, has submitted to both Senate and House subcommittees copies of the complaints which they have filed with the FCC against ABC and NBC on violation of equal time and reasonable access laws. The LaRouche campaign hopes to participate in hearings in both houses.

