

## **Congressional Closeup** by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

### **Abscam report is suddenly released**

After three years of investigation and nearly a year of preparation, the House Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights' report on the FBI and its Abscam entrapment operation against U.S. legislators was finally released to the public at the end of April. The report charged that "values reflected in our Constitution are directly threatened by these operations."

The report had been scheduled for release for some time with no explanations given for the lengthy delay.

But Capitol Hill sources noted that the report appeared several days after a nationally televised attack on the FBI by Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

The Judiciary Committee subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), conducted 21 hearings over a four-year period and concluded that "the proper limit of governmental intrusion into individuals' lives and privacy; . . . the protection of privileged relationships reflected in the First Amendment; and the requirements that criminal investigations and prosecutions be conducted in a fundamentally fair manner . . . are all endangered by the undercover technique as it is being used today. The infiltration by government agents, or criminals who are financed by the government, into the private lives of citizens; the spectacle of the U.S. government spending large sums of money to tempt people into committing crimes; and the atmosphere of fear, suspicion and paranoia which develops as the use of the technique expands, are all anathema to the values protected and cherished in our Constitution."

Unlike the Senate Select Commit-

tee's Abscam report, released early last year, which whitewashed the FBI's activities in Abscam and its illegal setup of former Sen. Harrison Williams (D-N.J.), the House subcommittee extensively detailed manifold abuses by the FBI as it carried out a series of undercover operations.

A large portion of the subcommittee report is devoted to an analysis of "Operation Corkscrew," an FBI political sting operation in which the Justice Department's much-touted safeguards were nowhere in evidence.

Operation Corkscrew, directed at the Cleveland Municipal Court, was initiated, according to the subcommittee, "without any basis for 'reasonable suspicion' of judicial case fixing." The result was that the FBI was "stung" by its own middleman and the reputation of the Cleveland municipal judicial system severely damaged in the eyes of the public.

The report notes the enormous increase in resources now being devoted to FBI sting operations, from \$1 million in 1977 to \$12.5 million in 1984. The subcommittee concluded that "if undercover operations are to be permitted, existing procedures must be substantially modified, with additional safeguards imposed, and enforcement mechanisms provided."

### **'No risk' of debtors' cartel in Latin America?**

A disbelieving House Banking Committee heard several witnesses insist that there was no political risk of a "debtors' cartel" emerging out of the recent temporary bailout of Argentina.

Testifying on May 1, New York

Federal Reserve Board Governor Anthony Solomon and Treasury Department officials insisted that the political risk to the United States was minimal, since U.S. funds are only exposed until Argentina signs a letter of agreement with the IMF. The hearings took place on the day after the 30-day deadline set for Argentina to sign such a letter had passed with no indication that any agreement would be reached.

Rep. Stephen Neal (D-N.C.), the floor manager for last year's bill boosting U.S. payments to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), insisted that "our funds are not at risk. We are only trying to aid a struggling democracy without risking any of our capital."

But most members of the committee did not buy this argument, and instead pushed their own schemes for financial reorganization, which would all impose greater austerity on both the industrialized and developing sectors while leaving the financiers who created the crisis riding high.

Rep. Charles Shumer (D-N.Y.) said that "this is the first time the U.S. government has acted to protect bank profits," and agreed with the other members of the subcommittee, including Republicans, who were calling for Washington to stand aside and let bank stockholders take their losses. Shumer pushed his policy of debt stretch out: "Look at Peru, it has major problems. Santo Domingo did just what the IMF said and now look what has happened." Shumer urged that the administration abide by the provisions of the 1983 IMF bill, which called for a debt stretchout.

Rep. Denny Smith (R-Oreg.), a fiscal conservative who recently organized support for a zero-percent in-

crease in defense spending, pushed his resolution to force U.S. banks to absorb Third World debt losses.

## Support for Colombia's war on drugs—a bit late

Congress took the belated step of passing a resolution commending Colombia's war against drugs, after the assassination of Colombian Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla on April 30.

The House of Representatives passed House Concurrent Resolution 275 May 1, which "commends the Government of Colombia for its recent seizure of record amounts of cocaine; and congratulates the Government of Colombia and the Colombian National Council on Dangerous Drugs on the recent decision to conduct experimental testing of herbicidal eradication methods; . . . and deplores the brutal assassination of Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, a leader in the fight against illicit narcotics in Colombia." The resolution was passed on the floor of the Senate the next day.

With a few notable exceptions on both sides of the Hill, Congress has been silent about the international effort against drugs. Some, such as Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Charles Percy (R-Ill.), have a record of open obstruction of anti-drug measures. While he has recently reversed his position, Percy was the Senate's leading opponent of U.S. assistance to Colombia for a paraquat drug eradication program and thereby helped to delay the war against the drug mafia which killed Lara Bonilla.

Percy's track record did not deter

him from giving a sanctimonious speech about Colombia and Lara Bonilla. "One of the most effective ways to achieve this objective [reducing the flow of cocaine and marijuana] is by herbicide eradication done in cooperation with the host government. It is my hope that Colombia will soon implement an ongoing herbicide eradication program aimed at reducing its illicit marijuana crop."

In a Senate speech urging the passage of the House resolution and passage of his own Senate Concurrent Resolution 358, Sen. Lawton Chiles (D-Fla.), who has been most outspoken about inadequate U.S. and international narcotics efforts, said: "The government of Colombia has embarked on a difficult journey to make this hemisphere a safer place, free of drugs and free of the criminal element which lives off the profits of those drugs.

"Colombia deserves our pat on the back and our encouragement to go forth as its President accounced, 'unleashing a war without quarter against the crooks that sow terror in cities, the countryside, and towns.'"

## 'KGB Budget' gets unexpected Senate backing

Although the Senate defeated the so-called KGB Budget by a margin of 33 to 65 on May 2, the proposal for an across-the-board freeze on defense spending mustered surprising support from formerly pro-defense, fiscally conservative Republicans who appear to have taken complete leave of their senses.

The KGB Budget—so named for

the initials of its sponsors, Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kan.), Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), and Joe Biden (D-Del.), would hold defense spending to a zero-percent increase after inflation. In the hours before the vote, Senate sources were reporting with alarm that the amendment actually stood a chance of passage and that the White House had done virtually no lobbying against it.

While the White House apparently finally moved to discourage support for the proposal, a number of conservative Senators voted for it, including Sens. Bill Armstrong (R-Colo.), David Boren (D-Okla.), Gordon Humphrey (R-N.H.), Roger Jepsen (R-Iowa), Bob Kasten (R-Wisc.), Mack Mattingly (R-Ga.), Don Nickles (R-Okla.), and Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.).

On the House side, 29 moderate-to-conservative Republican congressmen sent a letter to their Senate colleagues May 1 urging them to vote for the KGB Budget. Rep. Denny Smith (R-Oreg.) was reportedly the ringleader of the group.

John Tower (R-Tex.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, denounced the KGB plan in the floor debate: "What is most apparent in all of the debate is that the Soviet threat has simply not been addressed. We have heard nothing from the supporters of this plan concerning this assumption about current and future Soviet military developments.

"Can the proposers of the plan—and I invite their attention to what I am about to say—can the proposers of this plan guarantee me that the United States will not be more vulnerable to attack, that our vital interests abroad will not be more vulnerable to a challenge by Soviets and Soviet surrogates? Can they guarantee me that?"