

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

Senate spares SDI, calls for troop cuts

The Senate approved a \$305 billion Defense Authorization bill on Aug. 2, which would provide \$4.5 billion of the \$4.9 billion in funding sought by President Reagan for the Strategic Defense Initiative.

The higher Senate funding of the SDI was partly designed to offset the House level of \$3.1 billion. The administration will be hard-pressed to maintain the current \$4 billion SDI funding level in conference.

The Senate bill also proposes continued production of eight more B-2 Stealth bombers over the next two years if they meet specified performance tests. The House had limited production to four more planes over two years.

The bill also included dangerous "burden-sharing" amendments which will set the stage for U.S. troop pullouts from Europe and Korea. Designed to prod Japan, South Korea, and U.S. allies in Western Europe to increase their defense spending, the amendments, approved by voice vote, would require a reduction in U.S. troop strength in Europe in proportion to any European troop reductions made before agreement is reached with the Soviet bloc on negotiated force reductions.

Senators urged President Bush to consider the "feasibility and desirability of partial, gradual reductions in U.S. military personnel" in South Korea.

To prevent the SDI monies from being raided to finance anti-drug programs, the Senate voted to use \$1.7 billion in unspent funds from other government programs to finance last year's drug legislation. Armed Services Committee Chairman Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) commented that there

were "more profound differences" between the House and Senate bills this year than at any time in recent memory. The conference negotiations threaten to become a real battle when Congress reconvenes after its recess.

Judiciary committee spurns Thornburgh nominee

The rejection by the Senate of the nomination of William Lucas as the Justice Department's civil rights chief on Aug. 1, is more a defeat for Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, than for the nominee.

Lucas, a former FBI agent who was defeated for governor of Michigan, was initially eyed by Republican politicians as a candidate to head the U.S. Marshals Service or to be a deputy to drug czar William Bennett. Mr. Lucas' unfamiliarity with basic civil rights law was cited repeatedly as the reason for the Senate Judiciary Committee refusal on a 7-7 tie vote to recommend his confirmation as the country's top civil rights enforcer. The committee also rejected, on a 7-7 vote, a proposal to send the nomination to the full Senate without a recommendation. The vote was divided along party lines.

An Aug. 2 *Wall Street Journal* article describes how Thornburgh in an earlier incident had found himself "blitzed from the right," when Senate conservatives rejected his choice of Robert Fiske to be deputy attorney general. Thornburgh himself attributed the rejection of the Lucas nomination to a "strong dose of partisanship."

Some congressmen, enraged at Thornburgh's misuse of the department, have called the Thornburgh DOJ "the most political Justice Department in years."

Russian priests say Soviets heading for chaos

"The economy of the Soviet Union is about to reach the point of collapse," said Father Gleb Yakunin, a Russian Orthodox priest and former political prisoner recently arrived from the Soviet Union, speaking at a congressional briefing on Aug. 1. Yakunin is also a member of the Moscow branch of the Helsinki Commission.

"We are undergoing an acute economic and political crisis with galloping inflation," said Yakunin. "Economists are saying that decisive reforms will not take root. The country will submerge into chaos and anarchy. We are extremely afraid that we will have the type of developments as in Georgia or in Beijing in our own country on a grand scale."

Yakunin also said that the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church is totally controlled by the KGB.

Third World labeled greatest threat to U.S.

The Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, a group of Congressmen headed by Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.), and including Reps. Robert McEwen (R-Ohio), Mickey Leland (D-Tex.), and 140 members, issued a report on Aug. 1 entitled "The Developing World: Danger Point for U.S. Security." The report claims that the real security danger for the U.S. is not from the East, but from the Third World.

They claim the major security problems will include the environment, Third World debt, drugs, the "over-militarization" in some Third World countries, and nuclear proliferation. Rep. Mathew McHugh (D-N.Y.), former chairman of the cau-

cus, said recent improvements in U.S.-Soviet relations call for a new definition of national security. "Today's security threats are problems like global warming and international debt," and they "require transnational solutions."

The group calls for more U.S. support for international financial institutions, like the IMF, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and a greater reliance on these for the transfer of U.S. aid to the developing sector rather than bilateral aid. The report recommends that U.S. military aid to developing nations should be used "as leverage not just to encourage elections, but to support the consolidation of democracy."

The report added that both the developing and the developed nations should slash their military spending 50% by the year 2000 "to free up huge resources while maintaining mutual security."

Dannemeyer asks for public health response to AIDS

Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-Cal.) held a press conference on Aug. 3 to introduce his AIDS package in a bill entitled "Public Health Response to AIDS Act of 1989."

The Dannemeyer bill calls for: 1) confidential, identity-linked reporting of positive HIV test results to local health officials; 2) voluntary, routine HIV testing of most hospital patients, those who apply for marriage licenses, and those seeking treatment at clinics for sexually transmitted diseases, intravenous drug abuse, family planning, and tuberculosis; 3) criminal and civil penalties for those who know they are infected with HIV and knowingly engage in behavior with the intent to expose another person to the

fatal virus; 4) mandatory HIV testing to all individuals sentenced to a term of imprisonment upon entering prison, before and after each period in which the prisoner is permitted to leave the prison, and within 30 days of release; 5) states to adopt the same measures to control the spread of HIV infection as are used to control the spread of other sexually transmitted diseases, such as syphilis and gonorrhea; and 6) programs to notify the sexual and needle sharing partners of HIV infected persons that they may have been exposed to the virus.

Senate urges retaliation for Higgins murder

The Senate voted unanimously to urge the Bush administration to prosecute or retaliate against those responsible for the alleged hanging of Lt. Col. Higgins in Lebanon. The non-binding amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill was proposed by Senate Majority and Minority Leaders George Mitchell and Robert Dole.

"The United States must take the lead in putting an end to what has become an international scourge," said Mitchell.

Corruption alleged in Internal Revenue Service

The Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer, and Monetary Affairs of the House Government Operations Committee has begun hearings to investigate allegations of corruption within the Internal Revenue Service. The accusations are being brought to Congress by an organization of former and active IRS agents, called "The National Coalition of IRS Whistleblowers," who have assembled docu-

mentation of nepotism, misuse of government funds, bribery of agents, investments by auditors in companies they are assigned to audit, and cover-ups.

Committee staffers are complaining that lack of statutory authority to gain access to a variety of tax information, a big part of the IRS secrecy shield, has hampered their investigation. The IRS is more closely protected than the FBI and CIA, and has been immune to criticism of its gestapo-like powers, until recently.

Congress votes up S&L bailout compromise

Before breaking for their August recess on Aug. 4, the House and Senate passed a bill to bail out the savings and loan industry. It allocates \$50 billion over the next three years, and \$166 billion over the next ten years.

House-Senate conferees completed work on the bill on July 27, and were then forced to compromise with the administration on Aug. 3 after a threatened veto. The final compromise left \$20 billion of the bailout on-budget but exempt from Gramm-Rudman budget limitations, and \$30 billion off-budget.

Treasury Secretary Brady commented that the administration was generally pleased with the bill, but then added, "the administration's position on financing is perfectly clear and remains unchanged. We continued to actively oppose the House financing plan." House conferees, led by Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.), chairman of the Banking Committee, said putting the bill on budget would cost less, because the Treasury could borrow more cheaply than the proposed new agency.