

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

Senate ratifies CFE Treaty, with conditions

The Senate ratified on Nov. 25 in a 90-4 vote the treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), which has been signed by 22 nations including the United States and the now non-existent Soviet Union. As of mid-November, it had been ratified by only eight of these nations. The CFE Treaty has not yet been ratified by the Soviet Parliament.

Because of the rapid disintegration of the Soviet Union, a number of conditions were placed on the treaty making its implementation a questionable proposition. One condition requires the administration to report within 30 days on whether the Soviets have already violated the treaty by supplying false data on number of tanks and equipment to be dismantled. U.S. officials have already indicated that the Soviets did not count between 4,000 and 18,000 CFE-limited weapons when they supplied their data at the time the treaty was signed.

Ukraine's vote for independence has also created difficulties for the treaty. In anticipation of a vote for independence in the Ukrainian referendum Dec. 2, the Senate added a condition requiring further Senate approval of the treaty if Ukraine is added to the CFE signatories, or a new Senate vote on continued adherence to the treaty if the Ukraine does not sign it. President Bush has made Ukrainian acceptance of the CFE Treaty a condition of U.S. recognition of its independence.

Conditions placed on China MFN status

In a 409-21 vote on Nov. 26, the House approved the conference report regarding the extension of Most Favored Nation treatment to the products of the People's Republic of China,

thus clearing the way for Senate action.

The bill places conditions on continuation of MFN status for China. First, the bill requires that China release all pro-democracy prisoners in China and Tibet. Second, it requires that China suspend the sales of missile technology to Syria and Iran, provide assurances that it will not sell nuclear technology to non-nuclear states, and that it will abide by the guidelines of the Missile Technology Control Regime. Thirdly, it requires that China remove barriers to U.S. exports, end its export of prison-made goods, halt violations of international intellectual property law, and eliminate the use of transshipments to evade U.S. import quotas.

The legislation faces a threatened veto by President Bush.

Helms rattles sabre against independent Europe

In floor remarks on Nov. 22, Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) issued threats to any united Europe which is not in line with U.S. foreign policy. Helms raised the specter of the "explosive effects of nationalism" in Europe, echoing warnings issued at the conference of the Anti-Defamation League in Montreal, Canada in November.

"Our focus for developing U.S. relations with Europe should be a sound alliance strategy," said Helms. He indicated that this would help "to minimize the ability of an antagonistic rival to develop. . . . We do not want to see our alliances with individual European nations weaken. . . . nor our power to compete in European markets diminish."

Helms said that the United States should support a unified Europe "only if it is in our interest to do so. . . . The imposition of out-moded socialist

welfare principles or the development of European defense arrangements which vitiate the sacrifices of American time, money, and blood, must be fought."

Clearly aware of the European potential for breaking out of the Anglo-American financial system as that system itself falls apart, Helms's warning concluded that the United States "cannot afford to support institutions which may be opposed to our interests in the long term." He singled out the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, which he called "redundant and potentially impossible to control."

Helms said that the United States should "implement a national security policy which can cope with unexpected, as well as expected, developments in Europe and the former Soviet Union. We need to be aware of the fact that the European Community could develop in any number of directions, not all of them in the interest of the United States."

Brown calls for hearings on the economy

Rep. George Brown (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Science and Technology Committee, called for hearings to be held during the December congressional recess in order to find solutions to the U.S. economic decline.

In floor comments on Nov. 25, Brown noted that the greater part of that decline had been U.S. unwillingness "to adopt some of the more flexible and pragmatic policies of our competitors." Brown stressed that the solutions to these problems would not be a simple matter. "A rough rule of thumb would be that for each major problem area, and there are many, it will take about as long for solutions to

be effective as it took for the problem to develop, in most cases this will be a minimum of 10 years, frequently more."

Brown recommended that three recent reports issued by the Office of Technology Assessment on technology, innovation, and U.S. trade be used as the basis for congressional deliberations. "First," he noted, "we must see the light, which may take divine intervention." Failure of the Congress to deal with the fundamental economic problems facing the nation, Brown warned, would "continue to make a bipartisan mess of our country's future."

Bush Dems bottle up pro-Croatia resolution

In spite of growing concern in Congress about the Serbian military aggression against the Republic of Croatia, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Dante Fascell (D-Fla.) succeeded in preventing House Resolution 224 from being taken up by the committee as Congress adjourned Nov. 27. Sponsored by Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-Calif.), the resolution had at least 55 cosponsors as of Nov. 29. It calls on the United States to recognize Croatia and Slovenia as independent nations.

The resolution will not be dealt with before next year when Congress reconvenes.

There has been a great deal of strong-arming to eliminate the demand for recognition. In the Senate, a resolution sponsored by Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.) passed by voice vote on Nov. 21. The Senate resolution condemned the Serbian aggression but did not call for recognition of the republics of Croatia and Slovenia. Gore had originally included the de-

mand for recognition, but backed off from it in order to get the resolution introduced on the floor by unanimous consent.

Democrats call for action against Iraq

A number of so-called liberal Democratic senators have called on President Bush to force Iraq to agree to a U.N. oil sale as a remedy for the severe humanitarian, food, and health crisis afflicting that nation. The action, incredibly, seeks to shift the blame for the large number of deaths, especially of Iraqi children, from the allied bombing and U.S.-led embargo, onto the Iraqi government for its refusal to surrender to U.S.-U.N. diktat.

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) authored a letter to President Bush calling on Bush to "accomplish passage of a new U.N. Security Council resolution that will condemn Iraq's failure to sell its oil and will make such a sale mandatory, rather than discretionary." The senators seek to force Iraq to accept U.N. management of a \$1.6 billion sale of its oil, one-third of which would go to war reparations, with additional costs for U.N. handling of the receipts, and resulting food and medicine distribution.

The letter read: "It is increasingly clear that Saddam hopes to use the looming humanitarian crisis in his campaign to end the international sanctions against his outlaw regime."

Slavishly praising Bush's actions, the letter continued: "Your actions in pressing the Iraqis to abide by the U.N. resolutions calling for the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction provide an appropriate model for bringing about Iraqi compliance with the U.N. resolution ad-

ressing the humanitarian crisis. . . . We urge you to press the United Nations to find a similar measure to enforce compliance with the U.N. resolutions regarding the humanitarian crisis."

The senators who co-signed include: Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), Daniel Akaka (D-Hi.), Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), John Kerry (D-Mass.), Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.), Brock Adams (D-Wash.), Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Herb Kohl (D-Wisc.), Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio), Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.), and Arlen Specter (R-Penn.).

Resolution to aid Iraqi children passes

House Concurrent Resolution 168, sponsored by Rep. Tim Penny (D-Minn.), purportedly to help the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, passed the House Nov. 26. The resolution was substantially changed from the original version, which proposed that a portion of Iraq's frozen assets be released to Unicef for the sole purpose of providing medical and humanitarian assistance.

Penny acknowledged that during Thanksgiving 1,000 Iraqi children would likely die from starvation or illness. However, he said in a press release, "the time has passed when we can wait for oil sales to move forward. We should now press for another creative solution to this situation. One thing is certain: Saddam Hussein has put politics ahead of children's lives and futures. In order to save these children, it is time for the world community to marshal an international effort equal to the cooperative effort demonstrated during the Gulf crisis."