

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

Hamilton calls for curb on government secrecy

Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, called for greater openness in government, and criticized the Bush administration for not doing enough to reduce government secrecy here at home, in a commentary in the April 13 *Washington Post*.

"Current classification policy was set by President Reagan in 1982," wrote Hamilton. "As a result, the volume of classified material increased throughout the 1980s. . . . Almost 7 million new documents are now cloaked in secrecy each year." Hamilton noted that intelligence overclassification decreases accountability and "allows the Executive branch to control the policy agenda, to structure debate, and to release or withhold critical facts."

Among the reforms recommended by Hamilton are a "systematic, across-the-board declassification of older classified material" and a reduction of "black" defense programs.

Full NASA funding looks slim, says Mikulski

Speaking on April 9 at the annual Goddard Memorial Symposium sponsored by the American Astronautical Society, Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) reported that unless Congress is able to overturn the 1990 budget agreement which created a "firewall" between defense, foreign aid, and domestic spending, there will be no possibility to increase the FY 93 NASA budget by even the paltry 4.5% requested by the Bush administration. On the same day, by a 62-36 vote, the Senate failed to waive that section of the Congressional Budget Act which

prevents Congress from moving funds cut from defense to domestic discretionary programs.

Mikulski, who chairs the Senate subcommittee which appropriates funds for the space program, National Science Foundation, and veterans, said that without a "peace dividend," there will likely be a \$1 billion cut in the total funds her subcommittee has to appropriate, compared to FY 92.

In response to a question, Mikulski stated that she does not "believe the Congress will fund the Moon/Mars initiative in this decade," because even existing programs, and specifically Space Station Freedom, are in danger. Describing Freedom as "the NIH [National Institutes of Health] in the sky" because it will focus on biomedical experiments, Mikulski said we might have to "shrink or rethink" the program, and said it is likely NASA would oppose building it if that were to happen.

GOP attempt to cut entitlements defeated

The Senate staved off an attempt to cut entitlements, while passing by a vote of 54-35 on April 10 a \$1.5 trillion budget. A proposal sponsored by Sen. Pete Domenici (R-N.M.), the ranking Republican on the Senate Budget Committee, to curb future spending for entitlement programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and veterans benefits, was blocked by a vote of 66-88.

Domenici justified the measure, saying, "Everyone in this country has to understand there is no money left in the Treasury." The measure was a complement to the campaign of the Bush election committee, which is claiming that mandatory spending is running out of control. Sixteen Re-

publicans were joined by Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), Chuck Robb (D-Va.), Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), and David Boren (D-Okla.) in voting for the resolution.

Sen. Donald Riegle (D-Mich.), chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, said that the supporters of entitlement cuts were "taking this out of the hides of sick and elderly people in this country." He characterized the measure as "outrageous." The final budget included an increase of \$1.8 billion for welfare.

Baker attempts to sneak in IMF quota increase

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 9, Secretary of State James Baker III pleaded with the committee to pass the Freedom Support Act, announced the same day by President Bush at the American Society of Newspaper Editors, announcing the administration's contribution to a \$24 billion fund set up by the Group of Seven to aid Russia. Included in the bill, however, is the \$12 billion U.S. quota increase for the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The package is not as generous as it sounds. Baker indicated that \$620 million was technical and humanitarian assistance, which was requested last year, and \$3.75 billion was credits for the purchase of grain, which was already spent last year.

The attempt to sneak through the IMF quota increase was questioned by Republicans who traditionally have opposed the IMF as a "one world" institution. Sen. Hank Brown (R-Colo.) asked Baker if it wasn't true that the \$12 billion which the United States must contribute to the \$60 billion IMF quota increase was only marginally aid to the republics, since they would only "receive" \$18 billion from the

IMF over the next three years. "The point being," said Brown, "that it appears that IMF is being increased more than three times as much as the total amount that could go to the former Soviet Union."

Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) was concerned that IMF aid to Russia would simply be used to pay off old debt owed to Germany. Helms indicated that the Japanese seemed interested in doing business with the former republics, with or without the IMF.

The administration is trying to rush the program through Congress in time for the Bush summit with Russian President Boris Yeltsin in Washington in June. Despite criticism, the "freedom support" label seems to have gained support for the program. Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) bragged that the program would go through Congress "like a hot knife through butter."

Pressure builds for Bush to attend Earth Summit

The Senate passed a resolution by a vote of 87-11 on April 7, increasing the pressure on President Bush to attend the Earth Summit in Brazil in June.

The summit is aimed at establishing an international treaty of environmental restrictions on the basis of alleged "global warming." The United States has been willing to impose controls on all countries except itself. This has led to a growing resistance on the part of Third World countries to accept what they rightly view as restrictions imposed by the industrialized nations on the developing nations.

Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), quoting from such diverse sources as the Bible and the rock group Dire

Straits, railed at the Bush administration for not doing enough on the environmental front. Unfortunately, Gore was not alone. With the increasing psychological warfare of the environmental gurus and the growing clout of the environmentalist lobby, many legislators are paying homage to the myth of "global warming." A congressional delegation will be going to Rio de Janeiro in connection with the summit.

Senate would curb nuclear export to Third World

The Senate passed on April 9 the "Omnibus Nuclear Proliferation Control Act of 1992," which seeks to curb the export of nuclear technology to Third World nations.

The bill would impose sanctions on any country, firm, or individual which has "materially and with requisite knowledge" contributed through the export of goods or technology "to the efforts by any individual, group, or non-nuclear-weapon state to acquire unsafeguarded special nuclear material or to use, develop, produce, stockpile, or otherwise acquire any nuclear explosive device, whether or not the goods or technology is specifically designed or modified for that purpose."

The bill would prohibit U.S. support for multilateral aid that would promote the acquisition of unsafeguarded nuclear materials, and would reward "informers" who provide information on any country's surreptitious nuclear program.

The resolution backs efforts by the Bush administration to impose the new world order based on an explicit policy of "technological apartheid" toward the developing sector as a whole. It places in a position of "po-

tential adversary," U.S. trading partners, like Germany and Japan, and the countries of the former Soviet Union, if they export to Third World countries anything which could in any way be interpreted as contributing to a nuclear weapons program.

Because of the dual-use (civilian and military) nature of most high-technology exports to Third World countries, the restrictions effectively condemn most nations of the world to a below-subsistence existence.

House panel: AIDS policy a 'national disgrace'

In a report issued by the House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, the Bush administration was lambasted for an "underfunded, uncoordinated, and largely unsuccessful" effort in dealing with the AIDS epidemic.

The report reveals that the number of teenagers who have contracted AIDS increased by more than 70% in the past two years, with AIDS being the sixth-leading cause of death among youths aged 15-24. The report also found that AIDS among teenagers "is spreading unchecked" regardless of geography or economic status, although blacks represent 37% and Hispanics 19% of reported AIDS cases among teenagers.

The report, however, failed to recommend any positive steps. It accused the administration for placing "moralistic restrictions" that prevented explicit information about high-risk sexual practices and the effective use of condoms from being disseminated.

A dissenting Republican report disagreed with the findings, claiming that AIDS is a "behavioral problem" rather than a health issue, and that the solution, therefore, is to strengthen the family and promote sexual abstinence.