

Congressional Closeup by William Jones and Carl Osgood

Use of ground troops may trigger War Powers Act

Several congressmen indicated in early May that the deployment of U.S. ground troops in the Balkans would require congressional consent under the War Powers Act. That act, passed by Congress in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, orders the President to consult Congress "in every possible instance" before sending American troops into "hostilities."

On "Meet the Press" on May 2, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Joseph Biden (D-Del.) said that "the U.S. Congress must agree if U.S. forces are deployed on the ground."

Rep. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), one of the signers of the McCloskey resolution calling on the President to take tougher action against Serbia, has collected 91 signatures on a letter asking President Clinton to seek congressional approval before involving U.S. forces in the former Yugoslavia.

House Speaker Tom Foley (D-Wash.), when asked if Clinton would have to comply with the War Powers Act, commented that it "depends on the degree of involvement and whether . . . it is likely to place U.S. forces in hostilities."

Members skeptical over Serbian intentions

The reputed acceptance of the Vance-Owen plan by Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, has been met with much skepticism in Washington.

Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.), a leading proponent on Capitol Hill of U.S. military action against the Serbs, in an interview on "This Week With David Brinkley" on May 2, was asked what the goal of U.S. military action should be. Biden responded that "it

was a question of [maintaining] a country with a multi-ethnic government."

Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) said, "The President is right in calling for military action" against the Bosnian Serbs. He explained how Clinton had "inherited" the Bosnian problem from President Bush, who refused to act against the Serbs, which Dole considered a serious mistake. The Bush administration tried to keep Yugoslavia together and thereby "gave a green light to Milosevic. . . . Milosevic is no good, never will be. And you can't trust him and shouldn't trust him."

Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me.), on the same day on the CBS News program "Face the Nation," said that the arms embargo was "a direct form of intervention on the part of the aggressors, the Serbs." By maintaining it against Bosnia, "we have frozen in place a military imbalance."

When Serbs continued their bombardment of Muslim towns after Karadzic signed the Vance-Owen plan, Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.), at a press conference with Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic in Washington on May 5, said that "Clinton should have bombed Serb positions already today."

Clinton tax proposal hits rough going

The House Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Rep. Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.), began work on May 4 on the Clinton deficit reduction plan, "The Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1993," which is comprised of both substantial income tax hikes and cuts in Medicare and Medicaid.

The bill faces stiff opposition.

Ironically, the item which has come under the most criticism, the investment tax credit, is probably the only saving grace of what is otherwise a draconian piece of legislation. Although limited in scope, the Clinton proposal would create a permanent investment tax credit for equipment purchases by small businesses and a temporary investment credit for stepped-up equipment purchases by big business.

African nations targeted on 'human rights' charges

Pressure is increasing from Capitol Hill to penalize countries in Africa which are being depicted as "human rights violators." Chief among the targets is Sudan, and continual efforts are being made to place Sudan under U.N. receivership, similar to what was done to Iraq during the Persian Gulf war.

On May 5, hearings were held by the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on Africa on Sudan. In testimony to the subcommittee, George Moose, assistant secretary of state for African affairs, called for a greater U.N. presence in Sudan.

Roger Winter, the director of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, went even further, calling for the "establishment of a U.N.-supervised process for achieving political self-determination for the people of south Sudan." Sudan has been in a continual state of civil war for almost a decade, between the Muslim north of the country and the Christian and animist south. The rebel movements in the south under John Garang have received much encouragement (and financing) from political circles in the United States and elsewhere to contin-

ue their "rebellion."

Sen. Larry Pressler (R-S.D.) railed against African governments, citing the latest State Department human rights report. Pressler, who recently returned from a "fact-finding tour" in Africa, singled out Kenya for criticism, saying that "suppressions of political liberty, political participation, and free press are the primary human rights abuses. These abuses have been severe enough to warrant the suspension of all U.S. economic assistance. Though Kenya recently held a multiparty election for President and Parliament, it was marred by registration and voting irregularities, fraud and government-induced ethnic clashes."

Both Kenya and Sudan have leveled harsh criticisms of International Monetary Fund conditionalities in Africa. Kenya briefly refused to accept IMF conditionalities (see *EIR*, April 9) but was bludgeoned into submission to austerity dictates.

Smith says, keep ban on U.N. Population Fund

Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) attacked China's one-child-per-family policy and the U.N. Population Fund's (UNFPA) role in supporting it, in remarks on the House floor on April 28. "Even the *New York Times* recognizes the brutality and gross injustice of China's one-child-per-couple policy with its heavy reliance on forced abortion and forced sterilization," he said.

"Since 1979," Smith continued, "the UNFPA has helped design, fund, and implement the most vicious assault in human history on Chinese women and babies. Since 1985, the UNFPA has been found guilty of violating United States law by supporting and co-managing a coercive popula-

tion program. And because of this behavior, the Congress has repeatedly condemned coercion in family planning programs in China as crimes against humanity and the funds to the UNFPA have been cut off by the Reagan and Bush White House."

Smith warned that Clinton "seeks to reverse this humane pro-child, pro-woman policy, thus making the Clinton administration an accessory to these crimes against humanity. Mr. Clinton wants to give \$50 million to the UNFPA, which would be outrageous."

Senators call for ban on nuclear testing

James Exon (D-Neb.), Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.), and Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me.), in a letter sent to President Clinton on the weekend of May 1, indicated that it would be "unacceptable" for Clinton to oppose a total ban on nuclear weapons testing.

John Deutsch, undersecretary of defense and chairman of the Nuclear Weapons Council, told the House Armed Services Committee's nuclear energy panel on May 3 that "the Department of Defense supports the resumption of nuclear testing at the earliest possible time under the provisions of the law."

The "law" referred to by Deutsch was a test-ban measure signed by President Bush in order to keep alive a \$22 billion energy bill to which it was attached. The legislation suspended all U.S. underground nuclear testing for nine months as a prelude to a comprehensive test ban, but provided for lifting the moratorium from July until Sept. 30, 1996 for tests focusing on safety. But that exemption kicks in only after the White House

sends Congress its recommendation on a comprehensive test ban. That was due on March 1, but was postponed because the administration changed hands.

High-speed rail bills go to House and Senate

Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.) introduced the High-Speed Rail Development Act of 1993 on April 28. The bill, he said, "represents a significant first step toward widespread implementation of this exciting and important technology." Reps. John Dingell (D-Mich.) and Al Swift (D-Wash.) will be sponsoring a companion bill in the House.

"Clearly, implementation of high-speed rail in the United States will cost money, given the capital-intensive nature of such projects," Hollings said. "Recognizing the nation's current budgetary constraints, the President has set forth a reasonable first step which leverages other available federal programs, as well as state, local, and private-sector investment in high-speed rail. . . ."

"I further point out that we will need to continue to address the future potential role of high-speed rail magnetic levitation transportation."

The provisions of the bill include: designating high-speed rail (HSR) corridors as any corridor that serves two or more major metropolitan areas where high-speed rail offers the potential for cost-effective, inter-city transportation; financial assistance with a designated public agency to fund eligible improvements in infrastructure; research and development in steel-wheel-on-rail technologies; and appropriations for the Department of Transportation to fund these activities.