

Congressional Closeup by William Jones and Carl Osgood

Committee rejects patent for Confederate insignia

The Senate Judiciary Committee rejected on May 6 a request to renew the design patent for the insignia of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

The UDC's design patent has come up for reauthorization every 14 years since the organizations's founding in 1894, and had been approved unanimously by Congress each time. This time, however, freshman Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun (D-Ill.) found the symbol, which features the flag of the Confederacy, a glorification of the fight for slavery.

Moseley-Braun told the committee that the patent was not necessary and that the descendants of slaves held as human chattel under the flag of the Confederacy have to honor their ancestors by asking if the logo is appropriate. "The Ku Klux Klan understands the meaning of the symbols of the Confederacy when they raise the Confederate banner at their marches and rallies," she said.

Texas victory could boost Senate GOPers

The special election in Texas on June 5 to determine the successor to Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, who was appointed Treasury Secretary by President Clinton, could boost the clout of Senate Republicans, who plan to filibuster all proposals by the Clinton administration not to their liking.

Texas Gov. Ann Richardson had appointed Democrat Bob Krueger to Bentsen's seat until a special election could be arranged. But he has apparently failed to mobilize the support needed to maintain his seat. In the first phase of the special election, GOP state Treasurer Kay Bailey Hutchison received 497 more votes than Krueger,

earning her a spot in the runoff. Hutchison and Krueger each received 29% of the vote.

Two other Republicans, Reps. Joe Barton and Jack Fields, each received 14% of the vote, finishing third and fourth, and it is unlikely that these votes would shift to Krueger. If the Republicans win the Texas seat, Democrats will be reduced to a 56-44 majority in the Senate. A Republican victory would also be touted as indicating dissatisfaction with the Clinton presidency, propaganda which may be heeded by Democratic legislators who are already wary of supporting the President's program on a number of key issues.

Senate approves EPA as cabinet position

The Senate on May 4 approved an administration-backed bill to make the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the 15th cabinet position in the federal government. The bill was approved 79-15 after senators rejected several proposals which would have curbed a number of government regulations.

"Permanent and official cabinet-level status for the EPA moves the issue of environmental protection from the margins of policymaking to the center," said EPA Administrator Carol Browner. In the eyes of the bill's sponsor, Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio), the cabinet-level position would enhance the role of the United States in global environmental policy. The measure may, however, receive significantly more opposition in the house.

One measure which was voted down would have required an analysis of the impact on the economy and employment of every bill or agency regu-

lation, and directed that anticipated costs of environmental regulations be offset.

In other developments, the environmentalist profile of the Clinton administration was enhanced by the appointment of two key members of the notoriously zero-growth World Resources Institute: Gus Speth, the former WRI president, to be head of the U.N. Development Program, and Jessica Tuchman Mathews, former WRI vice president, to be deputy undersecretary for global affairs.

Resolution seeks intervention into Sudan

Senate resolution 94, sponsored by Paul Simon (D-Ill.) and discussed in hearings in early May, condemns "egregious human rights abuses by the government of Sudan" and calls on President Clinton to mount the same kind of relief operation that was done in Somalia including airlift operations.

The resolution calls for an increase in funding to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that supply aid to southern Sudan, for a U.N. Security Council resolution on Sudan, the appointment of a U.N. Special Representative for Sudan, the creation of "internationally monitored zones and resettlement zones in southern Sudan in which government forces, factions of the SPLA, and militia would not be allowed," and for the placement of human rights monitors in areas affected by the fighting and human rights abuses.

Similar legislation is expected to be introduced in the House by Frank Wolf (R-Va.). The resolution is the result of a campaign which has targeted Sudan for "human rights violations," although it is well known that the so-called rebellion in the south,

led by John Garang, has been bankrolled largely from the United States. The increased activity of the NGOs, such as the U.S. Committee on Refugees, has given them more elbow room to agitate throughout the country. They are now demanding the establishment of a U.N. protectorate in the south to protect their relief operations.

As Roger Winter, the director of the U.N. committee, indicated in his testimony on Capitol Hill on May 9, "either all sides must agree to a unified but secular Sudan, or south Sudan, along with several related marginalized areas such as the Nuba mountains, must be partitioned from the balance of Sudan."

In testimony on the same day, Assistant Secretary of State George Moose warned that the Clinton administration is now "reviewing the situation in Sudan closely" in order to "make the determination soon on whether to designate Sudan a state sponsor of terrorism."

Sudan has been a thorn in the side for many international financial institutions since it rejected International Monetary Fund conditionalities and proceeded to achieve self-sufficiency in agricultural production, which has made Sudan a net exporter of food.

Gonzalez calls economic crisis a depression

House Banking Committee chairman Henry Gonzalez (D-Tex.) blasted the notion that there is an economic recovery in progress. "The truth of the matter is, as I have been saying for over a year, we are in a silent, but terrible depression," Gonzalez said, in remarks on the House floor on April 26.

Gonzalez cited the masses of un-

employed as evidence that the country is in a depression. "The percentage of the total working-age population in the labor force, those working or looking for a job, has, unlike previous recessions, failed to rise."

He called government employment statistics "fraudulent," pointing out that they do not reflect workers who have simply dropped out of the labor force because they have been unable to find a job.

The chairman also berated the Republicans for having sabotaged Clinton's "subminimal" stimulus program. "The conditions in these [inner city] areas are often as desperate as they are in many of the poorest parts of the world. It is essential to give full support, at least, to the meager anemic, subminimal programs our President offers, to at least attempt to help these fellow Americans. We need to re-energize our economy. We need to give our people hope that they can have a decent job, a decent future, and a decent life."

Brown attacks cuts in Space Station funding

A "risk-avoidance society" won't build the space station, Rep. George Brown (D-Calif.) told a conference of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) on May 5. Brown, the chairman of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, scored the cultural shift that has made it almost impossible to do anything bold in space. He said that during his first two years as committee chairman, he got into a lot of fights, but it was "exhilarating." Now, he said, there is "confusion about the future of space programs," and he is in the position of fighting with an administration of his own party.

"I support Space Station Freedom," he stated emphatically, and advised that any "new direction" should "build on what we've done." In the first ten years of the space program, he said, we spent \$180 billion in today's dollars. For Freedom, "the commitment is much less demanding, but harder to fund." He scored the Clinton administration for "the clear intent to fundamentally redirect NASA's priorities away from the Space Station and manned flight, in general."

Poking at the congressional culprits in this mess, Brown said, "we are constantly in a fight over who gets to redesign the Space Station—us or the Appropriations Committee."

Echoing an important feature of the "Woman on Mars" scenario outlined by Lyndon LaRouche in a television broadcast during the 1988 election campaign, Brown stated that the Space Station should be a "learning laboratory," open to the public through satellite communications, and would provide the opportunity for interactive, "hands-on research, sitting at home." The American people have to be able to participate in the program, he stressed.

Dooley bill defends pesticide use

Rep. Calvin Dooley (D-Calif.) introduced the "Public Health Pesticides Protection Act" on April 27, to "ensure that Americans are adequately protected against the threat posed by mosquitoes and other disease-carrying pests."

Dooley said that because of legislation passed by Congress in 1988 requiring the reregistration of pesticides originally registered before 1984, public health officials are in danger of losing access to many of the pesticides that are used for the public good.