

Congressional Closeup by William Jones and Carl Osgood

House rejects military move against Haiti

The House on May 24 rejected military intervention against Haiti except as a last resort, and rejected tightening the economic embargo. The representatives approved a non-binding resolution to the Defense Authorization bill introduced by Porter Goss (R-Fla.) by a vote of 223-201, and rejected a substitute, co-sponsored by House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ron Dellums (D-Calif.) and House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), which called on the President to "swiftly intensify economic pressure on Haiti's military," by a vote of 191-236.

Both amendments reject military intervention. At a press conference with Minority Whip Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), Goss said, "Our message is: do not use that muscle at this time," referring to eight U.S. warships and 650 Marines near Haiti. Gingrich added, "I really hope the President does not plan to invade Haiti during the recess."

The Goss amendment calls for establishing a safe haven on the island of Ile de la Gonave, just west of Port au Prince. "By following the safe haven plan, we provide the real opportunity for the duly elected President [Jean-Bertrand Aristide] to return," Goss said, whereas the Hamilton-Dellums amendment "has no safe haven plan. It does have a strong endorsement of the punitive sanctions that have turned the economy to rubble in Haiti . . . and that have victimized almost everybody except the military it is aimed to hit at."

Hamilton rejoined, "We certainly need to seek to improve the enforcement [of the embargo] along the border with the Dominican Republic." Hamilton said Goss's plan "establishes an international presence on the island that constitutes invasion of Hai-

tian sovereignty" and that "it is very doubtful that President Aristide would agree to the plan. . . . He may simply view this as a ruse to restore him to power in purely technical terms."

Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) challenged the assumption that Aristide should be returned to power. "The evidence indicates that Mr. Aristide failed miserably" in acting democratically after taking office, he said. He quoted Assistant Secretary of State Alexander Watson that "there was ample evidence that President Aristide invited intimidating or violent behavior among his followers." Hyde drew the analogy to Hitler in 1933 to make the point that being democratically elected doesn't ensure democratic behavior.

Panel proposed for Whitewater investigation

On May 25, Sen. Al D'Amato (R-N.Y.), along with 21 Republican co-sponsors, introduced a resolution to establish a special subcommittee of the Senate Banking Committee to investigate the Whitewater scandal and all matters pertaining to it, including the Madison Guaranty savings and loan failure, the Resolution Trust Corp. investigations relating to it, the death of White House aide Vincent Foster, and the commodities trading activities of Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In remarks on the Senate floor, D'Amato complained that "there have been those who have been critical of the efforts to bring forth these hearings. They have suggested that somehow we would impede the operation of government. They have suggested that by our request, somehow we would divert attention from the problems that this nation faces. That is not this senator's intent or the intent of

this resolution. But it is our intent not to fall victim to that kind of cry that, for all time, would preclude the Congress from exercising our proper constitutional oversight responsibility. . . . It is a fallacious argument that should be set aside."

Population control amendment fails

An amendment to increase appropriations for family planning was defeated in the House by a vote of 371-54 on May 25. The amendment, sponsored by Rep. Anthony Beilenson (D-Calif.), would have added \$100 million to the \$569 million already appropriated for family planning activities, and would have funded the increase by cutting .75% out of all other foreign operations funds.

Beilenson, in remarks on the floor, complained that the funding level in the bill "is less than three-quarters of the amount needed for the U.S. to do its fair share to achieve universal access to family planning by the year 2000." He added, "The harsh fact is that unless the population growth of developing nations is slowed, none of the other forms of aid we are voting for in this bill will have any real or lasting value or effect. . . . Our generosity will always remain several steps behind the growing number of mouths to feed and hands to employ."

Unfortunately, the opposition to the amendment centered on how to finance the funding increase, rather than the insanity of Beilenson's views, which are in fact shared by many members of Congress. After agreeing with Beilenson's outlook, David Obey (D-Wisc.), the chairman of the Foreign Operations subcommittee, said that in order to fund Beilenson's proposal, "he has to cut a num-

ber of other programs which are, in my view, equally worthy, and in fact, the effect of the amendment winds up also reducing resources available for population programs in the United Nations programs and in Africa."

Barney Frank (D-Mass.), after agreeing wholeheartedly with Beilenson's views, focused his opposition to the amendment on the need "to pay more attention to such important issues as improving the status of women."

GATT faces stiff opposition, says Baucus

Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), chairman of the Senate Trade subcommittee, said on May 19 that the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) can pass Congress this year only if lawmakers waive a rule requiring them to offset lost tariffs with spending cuts or tax increases.

The GATT agreement is expected to reduce U.S. tariff revenue by at least \$14 billion over five years. Baucus said that winning approval for spending cuts to pay for the GATT agreement would be almost impossible, in part because Republicans have vowed to oppose tax increases. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor refused to embrace or reject the waiver.

NAFTA justifies election oversight, say Reps.

Reps. Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.) and David Bonior (D-Mich.) created an uproar in Mexico on May 17 when they suggested that that nation allow "full-scale international oversight" of upcoming elections,

In a debate on a resolution praising

the Mexican government for inviting the U.N. to give technical support in the coming presidential elections, Bonior said: "The spirit of NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] calls for a democratization process and the family of free and democratic nations includes much more than only trade and tariffs. It means basic human rights and dignity, and the electoral process is a great part of this." He denied that this was intervention in the internal affairs of Mexico.

The Mexican embassy in Washington answered: "For Mexico, the elections are an internal affair, pertaining exclusively to the Mexicans." Mexican Foreign Minister Manuel Tello said on May 17 that international observers "are not necessary" in the Aug. 21 elections, reported *La Jornada*, which editorialized on May 18 against such interference. The paper said that whatever the result of the negotiations on the subject, "it is clear that we are dealing with subjects which decisions pertain exclusively to the Mexicans and must be solved exclusively in the national arena." The Torricelli-Bonior resolution "seriously offends Mexican sovereignty," it said.

Crime bill not strong enough for Gorton

Slade Gorton (R-Wash.) complained on the Senate floor in May that the 1993 Crime Bill, soon to be in conference committee, is not strong enough. "I will not vote for a crime bill that will gut the death penalty. We cannot enact a law which would allow death row inmates, like Charles Campbell who has avoided justice for more than 12 years, to escape justice by providing them with even more avenues for endless delays," he said.

Gorton demanded the addition of three provisions that would make the bill even more draconian: He urged adoption of his "Sexually Violent Predators Amendment," which would set up a national tracking system for released convicted violent sexual offenders; he called for a "Three Strikes, You're Out" provision, such as that enacted in Washington State; and he called for "truth in sentencing" incentives to aid states that comply with the federal "truth in sentencing" guidelines contained in the bill, so that more prison space could be built.

Don't trust the Fed or bankers, says Gonzalez

"As the recent BCCI [Bank of Credit and Commerce International] and BNL [Banca Nazionale del Lavoro] scandals illustrate, the Federal Reserve is not always a stellar bank supervisor," House Banking Committee Chairman Henry Gonzalez (D-Tex.) said in a May 26 press release announcing the filing of the Derivatives Safety and Soundness Supervision Act of 1994 (H.R. 4503).

"The savings and loan crisis and the more recent banking industry troubles have taught us that inadequate regulation and supervision of certain banking activities is a sure recipe for disaster," Gonzalez said. "In order to protect taxpayers from a similar crisis, the Congress must ensure . . . that banks are not taking undue risks with derivatives expecting taxpayers to pay for losses. We've had enough 'heads I win, tails you lose' games. . . ."

"Regulators have been given plenty of warnings about the risks derivatives can pose. The bull is stomping his feet as he watches the red cape flashing before his eyes. Let's not wait until he rushes and we all get trampled."