

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

The following are some of the most important bills that will see floor action when Congress reconvenes in September. The Congressional Closeup will appear next after the new session opens.

IMF faces tough appropriations vote

Chances of the U.S. bailout appropriation for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) being approved in September are rated difficult at best. Appropriation failed July 29, 213 to 165; and authorization itself passed Aug. 3 by only a 217 to 211 vote.

Lead editorials the second week in August in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* lamented that the IMF faces another bruising fight after members will have spent a month and a half among their anti-IMF constituents.

Working out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the authorization will be another hurdle. To win House approval, a number of anti-bailout, anti-big bank, and other changes were added to the House version but did not appear in the Senate version.

Additions to the House version include instructions to the U.S. director of the IMF to consider whether a nation applying for a loan has signed the nuclear non-proliferation and the nuclear test ban treaties. He would also have to oppose loans to nations that practice apartheid; encourage practices that promote greater exchange rate stability; and encourage the restructuring of loans of developing nations as outlined in Felix Rohatyn's proposal for stretching debt payment schedules.

The House version also curbs further lending by U.S. banks if outstanding loans exceed the banks' capital base. Banks would be forced to pay into the U.S. Treasury any excess

of profits they have made in foreign lending above what they would have made on domestic loans. The bill mandates a study on the impact of export subsidies by IMF borrowers on U.S. steel exports.

Under the House version, the IMF would not be able to draw upon the General Agreements to Borrow funds from the U.S. Treasury until the Treasury Secretary certifies that the funds "are needed to forestall or cope with an impairment of the international monetary system." The "anti-bailout bailout provision" also states that the U.S. director must oppose a loan if it is determined that the loan will be primarily used to simply repay an older commercial loan.

The House-Senate conferees on the IMF bill will not be named until after Congress returns from recess. The Senate conferees will be under tremendous pressure from the Senate leadership and the administration to accept the House version for fear that any changes will lead to House defeat of the measure.

Last chance for immigration bill?

The Simpson-Mazzoli immigration restriction bill, a throw-back to the worst days of anti-immigration legislation of the Harriman eugenicist lobby of the 1920s, may come up soon after Congress reconvenes. If it is given a rule and brought to the floor of the House quickly, its chances of passage improve (it has already been passed by the Senate). Last year it failed in the last days of the Special

Session in December, when a large number of amendments tied it down.

A failure of its backers to force the House to act upon the Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill this fall will make it unlikely that they can get this legislation through for several more years. The press of other business and the elections would likely dissolve the tenuous coalition backing the politically volatile legislation.

The reason for this volatility is easy to see. The bill sets a climate for witchhunts against "illegal-looking" members of minority groups, especially Hispanics; points toward sealing the border with Mexico; and sets up U.S. employers as enforcers of this legislation, under threat of civil, and, in some cases, criminal penalties. It also establishes the principal of a universal work card which, under continued depression conditions, could easily lend itself to programs of regimented labor reminiscent of Nazi Germany; but this has not fazed Lane Kirkland and the leadership of the AFL-CIO, which is fully lined up behind the bill on the grounds it "keeps American jobs."

Simpson-Mazzoli, which has now been marked up by four House committees—Judiciary, Education and Labor, Energy and Commerce, and Agriculture—is pending before the House Rules committee. Each of the four committee chairmen must submit rules pertaining to the bill in writing before the bill goes to the floor. Of these only Kiki de la Garza (D-Tex.), chairman of the Agriculture Committee, has done so.

Since the last session, when the legislation was killed, changes have been made in the proposed legislation. These include: funding increases for the Immigration and Naturalization Service; adding a three-year transitional agricultural worker program

providing for a gradual decrease of temporary foreign farm laborers; advancing the cutoff date for granting permanent legal status to all immigrants who have lived in the United States illegally, from 1980 to 1982; and making optional rather than mandatory employer paperwork on employees, until the INS informs an employer that he has hired an illegal immigrant, whereupon the paperwork is mandatory for everyone he hires. While the bill specifically states that it provides no mandate for a national identification card system, it demands that the President study and report to Congress on alternative systems within three years.

Agriculture policy decisions pending

Agriculture Secretary John Block's efforts to freeze agricultural products' target prices, which set government subsidies and loans to American farmers, were defeated by a filibuster led by farm state Senate Democrats in the last days of the summer session. The administration and its supporters on Capitol Hill are still intent, however, on forcing through a freeze in the fall session.

The issue has lined up the free-market ideologues of Block's USDA and the U.S. Senate, whose policies threaten to destroy the few remaining independent farmers, against those "prairie" Democrats who realize that farmers must at least receive prices equal to the cost of production if they are to stay in business.

Leading the filibuster against Block's effort to freeze target prices on wheat and other grains have been John Melcher (D-Mont.), David Boren (D-Okla.) and James Exon (D-Neb.). This group forced H.R. 2733,

the Critical Agricultural Materials Act, off the floor during the last week of the session.

While they intend to continue to fight the policies of Block and his allies when the issue is raised again in September, the farm belt Democrats will not be able to wield the filibuster weapon as effectively at that time, because of the lack of pressure to conclude the session. At best, the senators will be able to ameliorate Block's policies.

S. 24, a bill sponsored by Walter Huddleston (D-Ken.) mandating a debt moratorium on loans extended to farmers by the various federal farm credit institutions, may be brought up in the September session if farm state Democrats choose to raise it as an amendment.

A spokesman for the Senate Agriculture Committee indicated that constituency pressure for the debt moratorium bill has now lessened because the demand for credit for spring planting had passed, and credit extensions for next year are too far in the future. The committee's majority members, reflecting administration policy, opposed the bill, but another Senate source indicated that the proposal may indeed be brought up in the looming battles between administration free-market agriculture policy and supporters of policies to maintain food production.

MX and beam weapons dominate military agenda

Despite the numerous supportive congressional votes on the President's MX proposal during 1983, the issue is not settled for this year. The FY84 Defense Authorization bill, which includes funding for the MX, passed the House and Senate in differing ver-

sions in July and went to a joint conference assigned to work out the differences. That now-completed conference report will have to be passed by both houses when they reconvene in September.

It is customary for a conference report to pass with little discussion or opposition. However, opponents of the MX missile have indicated that they will band together with opponents of the resumption of funding for chemical and biological weapons and try to kill the conference report. The MX passed the House by only 14 votes and the chemical and biological weapons provisions passed the Senate by a narrow margin.

Opponents of the MX continue to use the issue as a bludgeon to force the administration into further concessions on arms control and to lock it into continued near-term acceptance of the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). However, supporters of the President's efforts to establish a new strategic defense doctrine, based on space-based defensive beam technologies, may again attempt to put the Senate on record favoring the new doctrine.

Sources on Capitol Hill have indicated that S.J.R. 100, a resolution supporting space-based beam weapons authored by Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.) may be brought up in some form during the debate on the defense appropriations bill.

Wallop may bring up either that resolution or an amendment which specifies particular funding- and mission-orientation for certain categories of these weapons systems in an effort to push the administration beyond the research and development phase and into a more aggressive program on these weapons. In July, Wallop brought up a similar amendment which lost by a 63 to 27 vote.