

It is expected that the nomination of General Monahan will be approved before the Congress adjourns.

Drug bill debate focuses on death penalty

The Senate on Oct. 13 defeated numerous attempts to eliminate the controversial death penalty from the drug bill now under consideration. Three amendments were submitted to replace or to place limitations on the death penalty clause.

The bill states that the death penalty would be allowed for major drug operators who intentionally or recklessly kill or order killings, or for others, such as hired killers, who commit murder as part of a continuing drug enterprise. The death penalty would also apply to anyone who kills a law enforcement officer while committing a drug-related felony.

The Senate approved civil penalties of up to \$10,000 for possession of any amount of illegal drugs intended for personal use.

Proxmire tries again for a new banking bill

As the 100th Congress draws to a close, Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wisc.) made an 11th-hour attempt to try to pass banking legislation that would expand banks' securities powers into corporate debt, and ultimately, corporate equities. Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W. Va.) had agreed to let Proxmire take his bill to the floor on the night of Oct. 11. Byrd later reneged, in the face of threatened delays from Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.), the chief defender of the securities industry in the Senate.

Similar legislation has been tied up in the House because of jurisdictional battles between the House Banking Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has responsibility for the securities industry.

As it is so late in the session, however, there is little chance that such legislation will be taken up by the 100th Congress.

Sanctions take toll on South African blacks

On Oct. 13, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) issued a report analyzing data for the first nine months of 1987, and found that South Africa's major exports to the United States had fallen \$417 million from the same period last year. The total decrease in South African sales abroad was put at \$469 million.

South African government figures, released at the same time, show that the various boycotts, lending restrictions, and other economic punishment imposed by the international community have helped limit South Africa's economic growth between 1980 and 1987 to 0.4%.

The stagnation in growth has already taken its toll on the living standards of South Africans, hitting the poorest sections of the population—the blacks—the hardest.

But not only South Africa is hurt by the boycott. The other states of southern and central Africa that rely on the mining and industrial potential of the South African economy have also been affected.

The supposed intent of the sanctions was to force the South African government to eliminate the apartheid system more rapidly. The net effect of

the sanctions has, however, been to undermine the limited reforms of the Botha government and to strengthen the right-wing opposition to Botha within South Africa, threatening a racist backlash in that country.

Congress passes \$1 billion AIDS package

The AIDS Federal Policy Act was approved by Congress on Oct. 13, but without the controversial confidentiality clause which had been attached to the bill. The original bill, initiated by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), would have imposed, under the rubric of confidentiality, stiff fines of up to \$10,000 on anyone who revealed that another person was a carrier of the deadly virus. It was because of this provision, and the lack of even moderate stipulations that would have required mandatory testing, that the bill had been opposed by a handful of conservative Republican congressmen.

When the bill was passed by the House, it was then to be sent to conference committee to be reconciled with the Senate AIDS bill. Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) blocked appointment of a conference committee in the Senate by threatening a filibuster. After dropping the provisions for confidentiality, Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) introduced a new version of the bill, which was passed by voice vote.

The legislation calls for adding at least 780 full-time employees to the Public Health Service for AIDS research in the coming fiscal year. The bill authorizes \$600 million in funding for research, and \$100 million to be spent on home health care for people infected with HIV. \$100 million will go to education, and \$100 million will be spent for anonymous testing.