

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

Gore would impose limits on CO₂ emissions

Sen. Al Gore (D-Tenn.), who will be leading the Senate delegation to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June introduced, with the support of Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me.), the "Global Climate Protection Act" which calls for the President to achieve the stabilization of carbon dioxide at 1990 levels by Jan. 1, 2000.

The Bush administration has not yet agreed to specific limitations on CO₂ emissions. The Gore measure also mandates "citizen action," in which any U.S. citizen may start legal action against any officer of the United States "alleging a failure by the officer to perform any act or duty" mandated by the legislation.

Infrastructure needed for economic competitiveness

Testifying before the Transport Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations on April 29, *21st Century Science & Technology* Associate Editor Marsha Freeman stated that any debate on economic competitiveness "which does not begin from the standpoint of the transportation and energy infrastructure requirements which are prerequisite for renewed economic growth, is not serious."

Commenting on the fact that the Bush administration has cut the funding request for the programs authorized under last year's Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, Freeman pointed out that although the \$151 billion authorized to be spent over the next six years might appear to be a large amount of money, "it has been the trillions of dollars of investment in canals, bridges, tunnels,

ports, locks and dams, railroads, highways, and mass transit" that allowed the United States to become an "economic superpower."

The new magnetic levitation rail program authorized by the act, Freeman pointed out, allows the transportation sector to once again become a technology driver in the economy, as the railroads were in the last century.

In response to the testimony, Rep. Bob Carr (D-Mich.) commented that there should be a capital investment portion of the transportation budget separate from subsidies for operating existing systems, to ensure investment in new transport programs.

Rehnquist ignores 'separation of powers'

U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist denied without comment an emergency request by Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.) to block Special Counsel Malcolm Wilkey from examining all the records of the House bank pending further court action. The matter was taken to the Supreme Court after a federal court of appeals ruled that Wilkey could investigate the records.

Despite the fact that the House voted to allow the files to be handed over to the special counsel, Gonzalez argued that placing the records in Wilkey's hands threatened the independence of Congress. "It is not fanciful to assume . . . that members in their day-to-day dealings with the Executive branch will be reluctant to bite the hand that inexplicably is investigating them and that possesses their most intimate personal records," Gonzalez stated in the request to Rehnquist.

The subpoena for bank records is highly unusual. The House "bank" is actually a depository maintained by

the House, not a federally insured financial institution. Even in the case of failed, federally insured S&Ls where billions of dollars were lost and criminal activity was involved, the checking accounts of every individual account holder were never subpoenaed. None of the House members subjected to Wilkey's seizure have been accused or even suspected of committing a crime. There is also a strong suspicion that material which has been made available to the Department of Justice in that way runs a great risk of being "leaked," thus affecting the political fortunes of members in this year's election.

Space Station Freedom backed by House

By a two-to-one margin, the House voted on April 29 to maintain the \$2.25 billion requested for Space Station Freedom in the FY 93 NASA budget. The vote came after an amendment by Rep. Timothy Roemer (D-Ind.), which would have stricken the \$2.25 billion for the space station and reserved \$1.1 billion of that amount for other NASA programs, was defeated on a 254-159 vote. President Bush had threatened to veto the authorization bill if it did not include money for the Space Station.

This floor fight gave the supporters of Space Station Freedom confidence for the bigger battle which will take place over appropriations funding. In that bill, the NASA budget is pitted against veterans benefits and housing subsidies. Appropriations subcommittee chairman Rep. Bob Traxler (D-Mich.), who tried to kill Freedom last year, is retiring in November.

House, Senate ignore veto threat as SDI, B2 slashed

The Senate approved 61-38 on May 6 a bill which would slash the B-2 bomber and the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) anti-missile program, while maintaining funding for two Seawolf submarines. President Bush has threatened a veto if the submarines are not cut.

On May 7, the House approved legislation which would cut one of the two Seawolf submarines, but also cut the administration's proposed funding of the SDI by \$1.3 billion and cut funding to the B-2 program by \$1 billion. The legislation would cut a total of \$5.8 billion from this year's budget.

Some \$3.5 million was also cut from the budget of the high-energy physics Fermi laboratory in Illinois.

Scientists cool off on global warming

In testimony before the Environment subcommittee of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on May 6, proponents of the "global warming" hoaxes were forced to back-pedal on their positions.

Dr. Robert Watson, who in the summer of 1988 testified that there would be global warming due to the increase of atmospheric carbon dioxide, admitted that there is such a high level of scientific uncertainty in the global climate models being used that it is impossible to know not only what will happen in the future, but even what has already happened. "Global mean surface air temperature has increased by 0.3-0.6° Celsius," Watson asserted, but, he admitted, this magnitude is the same as "natural climate variability," and cannot be blamed on increased atmospher-

ic carbon dioxide.

Patrick Michaels from the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia, an outspoken opponent of the "global warming" fraud, presented new data which indicates that there has been some atmospheric warming, but at night, contrary to the predictions of every climate model in use. Michaels explained that this will extend the growing season for farmers, could *increase* snow at the poles, and will have no deleterious effects. Also, while the models predicted that warming would take place over the large industrialized land masses of the Northern Hemisphere, it has been measured in Australia.

Fed is unconstitutional says Gonzalez

House Banking Chairman Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.), in comments on the House floor on May 4, attacked the Federal Reserve System and called for a return of congressional control over the monetary system.

Noting how the average citizen, reading his Constitution, would believe that the Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs of the House has jurisdiction over banking and monetary matters and that the Congress "controls the purse," Gonzalez complained that this mandate was "long abdicated by the Congress after the passage of the Federal Reserve Board Act of 1913 and the creation within the activities of that board of such a thing as the Open Market Committee." This structure, Gonzalez noted, was based on the British system of the Exchequer, and that "the Federal Reserve, through its Open Market Committee" has arrogated to itself the power given to Congress.

Gonzalez argued that the Fed is

"totally independent of anything that Congress wants to do, or for that matter the Executive branch," and is arranged so that the "high priests of finance" can "hide their thievery in this kind of secrecy.

"Penny-ante loan sharks," under present monetary regulations, "are now legalized usurers. . . . Usury is legal," continued Gonzalez, although "human beings had been protected from [usury] since 7,000 years before Christ" but now usury laws or "interest-rate controls" have been abolished. Even states like Texas, which did have such laws, were forced to abandon them under pressure from the federal government, he said.

Helms seeks suspension of China MFN status

Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) introduced an amendment on May 6 which called for a suspension of Most Favored Nation status for China "until the President determines and certifies that high-level Chinese officials are under indictment in the United States for criminal activities in connection with the export of textiles to the United States."

Helms said that he had been informed by U.S. Commissioner of Customs Carol Hallett that indictments had been filed in federal court against the Chinese government for failure to pay duties and taxes on textiles and clothing entering the United States. This was the first indictment to result from a massive federal investigation into the alleged fraud.

Hallett indicated that there was direct involvement by Chinese trade officials. Helms claims that the fraud involves the transshipment of goods made by Chinese slave labor through other countries and understating the value of the goods.